Origins of Kingship Traditions and Symbolism in the Great Lakes Region of Africa

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Cover illustration: During his traditional installation 31/7/1993 the Kabaka Ronald Mwenda Mutebi II symbolically poked the white cow "to feed the Baganda". Photo: by courtesy of Mr Ronnie Sessanga

Picture editing: Jim Elfström

This study is dedicated to the memory of
My husband Hans
And to our baby Helena
Both buried in East African soil

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Some forty five years ago my academic journey started at the University of Lund. Prof. Olof Pettersson's inspiring lectures and pioneering social contextual approach to the study of the History of Religions evoked my interest in this subject. It was Olof Pettersson who advised me to do research on the topic of the *Bacwezi*. On his retirement in 1984, a few years before his death, Pettersson referred me to Prof. Åke Hultkrantz at the University of Stockholm. Although at that time Hultkrantz only had two years left until his retirement, his learning and methodological insight would eventually prove to be of crucial importance to the edifice of my thesis. Employed on the synchronic level, Hultkrantz' religio-ecological perspective could be successfully applied to my material. Over the years, Åke Hultkrantz' kind and humorous encouragement was a constant source of inspiration, for which I am truly grateful. He died in 2006.

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This study would not have been practicable without my long-standing acquaintance with East Africa. I am deeply indebted to the Church of Sweden Mission in co-operation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania for facilitating the African experience, which I shared with my late husband Hans. In Sweden our commitment within Amnesty International brought us into contact with leading members of the National Resistance Movement in Uganda, Hon. Mr Amama Mbabazi, Hon. Dr Ruhakana Rugunda and Hon. Mrs Janet Museveni. In particular, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to H.E. the President of the Republic of Uganda, Mr Yoweri K. Museveni for the support given during the initial stages of my systematic fieldwork and for continuously following the progress of the project with keen interest.

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Unfortunately, my husband and many of my esteemed teachers, supervisors, colleagues and assistants did not live to see the final result of this research work. I humbly hope and pray that the voices of the past expressed here will live on for the benefit of the present and coming generations.

Uppsala, August 2008
Birgitta Farelius

Postscript

At the height of the Corona pandemic my old friends, The Rt Hon. Prime Minister Dr Ruhakana and Mama Jo Rugunda called me and asked how I was doing and if I still was writing. The message was: We need to see your book corrected and printed. Thanks a lot for triggering the process of finalising my work of a lifetime!

The book you hold in your hands is first and foremost a communal enterprise, the outcome of an inspiring dialogue with elders who trusted me enough to share the deepest knowledge and wisdom of their own culture and history.

Therefore, I feel very much grateful and honoured towards, Mr James Tumusiime of Fountain Publishers for accepting my study to be published inside the Great Lakes Region. It has been edited and transformed from a dissertation to a book primarily intended for the general public among the people concerned, for those to whom it belongs. My gratefulness is extended to the Fountain editing team, who had to bear with me when I delayed delivering certain updated details because of sickness. Then they had to start with another assignment. That is why the flow of editing unfortunately got disrupted, so much that the 2012 edition was disturbed by serious mistakes in the endnote system and later withdrawn from the publisher.

Over the years I have been privileged to present my research to certain interested audiences, Swedish as well as international. I have benefitted very much from my forthgoing electronic and other communications with knowledgeable and informed persons as well as research students and experts in relevant academic fields. Among the last-mentioned, Prof. Abdulaziz Lodhi and Ass. Prof. Anne Kubai remain as my best mentors. Social media has been helpful in widening my circles, link up with friends from times gone by as well as forging new friendship bonds. Specifically, I would like to acknowledge Adv. Kanani Omwami Rwenyagira for his unflinching support to get the book corrected and published while I still live to see it in print. It is my hope and prayer that it will reach out and become easily available in the region and beyond.

Additionally, I thank God for my lastborn granddaughter Elvira, born in 2010, who is cheering up my old age together with her sisters, cousins and other family members.

Ndi omukaikuru wanyu,
Birgitta Farelius
Dr in History of Religions
Uppsala, November 2020

Some Technicalities

People born and bred in the region between the Great Lakes in Central Africa and beyond will probably feel at ease with the presentation that evolves in this book. Hopefully they will recognise their own culture as it comes to life in memories, perhaps fragmented as knowledge contained in stories told long ago. Nevertheless, local readers may wonder at the spelling and orthography that appear unfamiliar in his/her specific context. Therefore, I would like to enumerate some technicalities. Hoping to maintain local and regional expressions I have kept Bantu noun prefixing of the words and concepts in the text. The reader who may be unaccustomed with Bantu speech may need some basic guidelines to facilitate easier access to the rich and multi-level African realities, which can be exposed and communicated to the world at large.

In languages spoken in the Great Lakes area, as is the case in all Bantu languages, the noun is formed by adding a prefix to the root. The nouns in these languages fall into 16 classes, each of which is distinguished by its own prefix. *Omu-* or *mu-*, for example, denotes the singular form of the "man class" (Rascher 1958:11), as in *omu-ntu*, 'a human being'. The plural is formed by the prefix *aba-* or *ba-*, *aba-ntu* implying 'people' or 'human beings'. The *Ba*-ganda people speak the language of *Lu*-ganda, *lu-* or *ru-* being the prefix that denotes the language. The locative prefix is *bu-*, hence *Bu*-ganda is the name of the place where the *Ba*-ganda live (see Table 1).

The observant reader will have noticed that in the foregoing paragraph I have used both double and single quotation marks. For quotations drawn from books or other source material, (it may be a statement or only a denomination denoting a term or a concept), I have used double inverted commas. The same practice is implied to my interpretations of symbolic or figurative meanings pertaining to names and terms as they occur in their specific contexts. On the other hand, direct translations from the local languages are placed within single quotation marks as in the above mentioned *omu-ntu*, 'a human being'.

Concerning pronunciation I have chosen to use double vowels to indicate that the vowel is a long one, for example in the *Basiita* clan

name (some sources use [î]). In the Great Lakes Bantu languages one syllable is strongly accented in a word, usually, but not always, the penultimate syllable. Thus the accented syllable denotes the stem of the word. There is a general agreement in the way the accent and intonation are heard in the various languages in the present study. However, Runyoro has a specific tonal tinge that sets it apart from for example Luhaya, spoken by the Bahaya in Buhaya. Unfortunately, in my source material, I have not succeeded in marking the correct tones that are significantly used in these languages. The tones are not always indicated in the dictionaries that I have consulted, but in applicable cases I have made use of those references that give tone indications, e.g. Schoenbrun (1997).

Variations in spelling should not be perceived as erroneous. They reflect local divergences in pronunciation. There is a variation in the way men and women are addressed. In this study, for Buhaya and Karagwe, *Ta* and *Ma* are traditionally applied to Mr and Mrs. In Western Uganda people are identified by their clan affiliations. For example, in Bunyoro and Tooro, a man of the *Omusiita* clan is called *Omu-siita*, while a woman, *omu-kati* (*-kazi* in the southern areas), is called *Omusiita-kati*. In south-western Uganda the Kiswahili title *Mzee* is used for the old men who shared their knowledge. The women are simply called Mrs in Tanzania Kiswahili is the national language. Before you are entitled to become a *Mzee* you are called *Ndugu*, 'brother', while the women are 'sisters', *Dada*, later to be respected as *Mama*. Teachers are addressed as *Mwalimu*.

The names mentioned in the traditions are not to be treated as personal names but should rather be regarded as symbols or concepts carrying a wealth of meanings that in specific contexts can reveal history. Therefore they are rendered in italics. This facilitates easier access to electronic indexing. In my comments and interpretations of quoted texts from my fieldwork or drawn from other relevant sources I have chosen to use personal pronouns within double quotation marks. Such a usage avoids giving the impression that the words are names of individuals. This practice does not refer to the necessary paraphrasing of published versions of the Milk Test traditions treated in chapter 8.

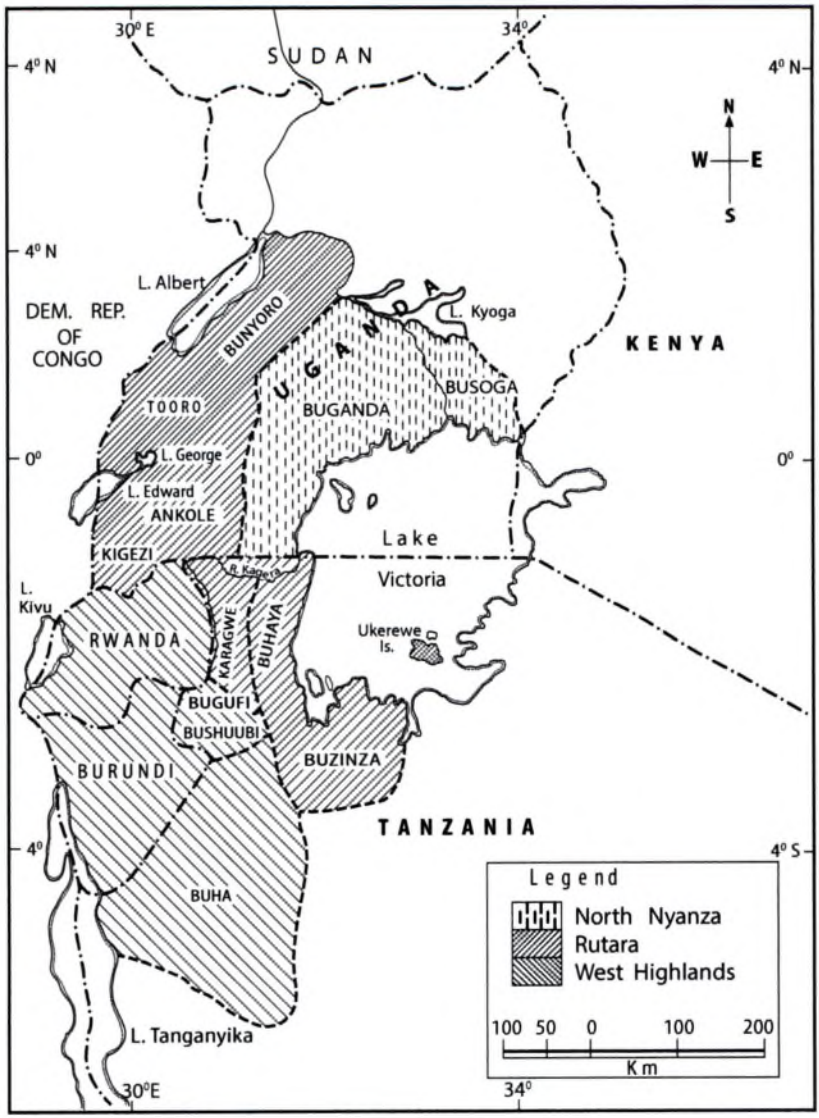

Figure 1. Present Great Lakes Bantu Language groups

Table 1. Great Lakes Bantu successor languages (cf. Schoenbrun, 1990:134)

GREAT LAKES BANTU SUCCESSOR LANGUAGES Relevant interlacustrine speech communities of today		
Language, *lu-/ru-/ki-/gi-*	Area, *bu-*	People, *ba-*
NORTH NYANZA LANGUAGE GROUP		
Luganda	Buganda	Baganda
Lusoga	Busoga	Basoga
RUTARA LANGUAGE GROUP		
Runyoro	Bunyoro	Banyoro
Rutooro	Tooro	Batooro
Runyankore	Ankole*	Banyankore
Rukiga	Kigezi**	Bakiga
Luhaya	Buhaya***	Bahaya
Runyambo	Karagwe	Banyambo
Kikerebe	Ukerewe	Bakerebe
Kizinza	Buzinza****	Bazinza
WEST HIGHLANDS LANGUAGE GROUP		
Ikinyarwanda	Rwanda	Banyarwanda
Ikirundi	Burundi	Barundi
Kiha	Buha	Baha
Kihaangaza	Bugufi	Bahaangaza
Igishuubi	Bushuubi	Bashuubi

* The former district of Ankole comprises the districts of Mbarara, Bushenyi and Ntungamo.

** The former district of Kigezi is divided into Rukungiri, (Kanungu fr. 2001), Kisoro and Kabale districts.

***The old kingdoms of Buhaya are Kiziba, Bugabo, Kyamutwara, Maruku, Kianja, Ihangiro and Missenyi.

****Rusubi in Buzinza is the old kingdom in Biharamulo district of concern for this study.

In order to facilitate an understanding of the text I have added a short-list of key terminologies. One of the important key words, the *Bacwezi*, has been spelt in different ways. In older literature the spelling is *Bachwezi*, the *ch* to be pronounced [tʃ] followed by a short u-sound rendered as w: [batʃ(u)e'zi]. I have made use of the currently used *-cwezi*, because it conforms to the reality of the Bantu-Luo borderland culture, where the concept of *Bacwezi* was formulated.

This study is multi-dimensional. Thus references to events that occurred during the time I spent in the Great Lakes region and also to later developments will sometimes be placed in the endnotes thereby illustrating important issues taken up in the study. Suitable photographs are inserted in the text where these are relevant. For practical purposes relevant to this study, I have not managed to update the administrative map since the 1990's.

In spite of the changes that have occurred since the time of my first encounter with Africa, I believe that the culture in the region will endure the test of time.

Plate 1. **The cones of the Virunga Vulcanoes along the Western Rift some 200 kilometres away can sometimes be seen from Karagwe, when the air has cleared after heavy rains (Photo: Hans Farelius)**

Glossary

Key Terminologies

A/Batembuzi, (sing. *O/Mutem-buzi*), from **-tembul-*, 'to clear new land' (a. 300-400 AD)	'pioneers', used in kingship traditions spread from the Bunyoro centre of Creation
A/Bayango/A/Bayangwe/A/Ba- Nyange	ritual clan of the monkey totem (Karagwe, Buhaya/Igara, Nkore/Burundi)
Babiito	the royal clan of the bushbuck totem (Bunyoro, Tooro and Kiziba) Kooki
Bacwezi [batʃ(u)e´zi]	spirits of the land (Bunyoro), ancestors of kings, name of an adopted ancestral clan (Rutara)
Bahima/Bahuma	socio-political stratification category of aristocracy defined by the ownership of cattle (Rutara)
Bahinda	the royal clan of the monkey totem (Rutara: Karagwe, Nkore, Ihangiro, Kianja, Rusubi)
Bahutu	socio-political stratification category of clientship, farmers (West Highlands)
Bairu (sing. *Omwiru*)	socio-political stratification category, commoners, farmers (Rutara)
Basingo	the cursed clan (Rutara: Banyambo, Bahaya, Banyankore, Banyoro, Batooro)
Batutsi/Batusi	socio-political stratification category of cattle-owning patrons (West Highlands)
Batwa	socio-political stratification category of clientship, potters (West Highlands)

Bigo bya Mugenyi	'the cattle enclosures of the stranger', archaeo-logical remains in SW Uganda
businge/busîngye	'peace' (Rutara: Runyambo, Luhaya, Runyoro/Runyankore, Rukiga)
Ekika	'clan' (North Nyanza: Luganda, Lusoga)
Ekitara	'sword'
embandwa/emandwa/ imandwa	'spirit', 'medium, priest' (Runyambo, Luhaya, Runyoro, Rutooro/Runyankore, Rukiga/West Highlands)
Engaaju	'long-horned head of cattle' (Rutara)
engoma/ingoma/ èng'ng'oma	'drum', symbol of power (Rutara/West Highlands/ North Nyanza)
Enkima	'Monkey' (totem) clan (Buganda)
Enkira	'tail-lessness', totem of Great Lakes first-comer clans
ente enkira	'the tail-less cow' (Buganda)
Enyambo	'long-horned, brown cow', eponymous to the Banyambo of Karagwe
enyondo, enyoondo/ è`nnyondo/inyuundo	'hammer (of smith)' (Rutara/North Nyanza/West Highlands)
-gab- kingship	"the Great Lakes first-comer clans' redistribution ideology of kingship"
Imana	'God, the Creator' (West Highlands)
inka ingabe	'the white cow' (Rwanda)
Isimbwa	"the little planting-spear", "the mechanism of intermarriage", the *Bacwezi* ancestor or "grandfather" (Rutara)
Kabaka	'the jawbone of', the title of the king in Buganda

Katonda	'God, the Creator' (North Nyanza/ Rutara: Luhaya)
Kintu (*ki-* amplicative prefix)	'the Great Man of the People'
Kitara	"the material and immaterial Empire of the *Bacwezi*"
Kitare (*ki-* amplicative, ancient feminine prefix denoting sacredness)	"*Kintu*'s white cow"
Kuragura	'divination', 'prophesy'
ku-tabaaza	'to bury a king' (Rutara, West Highlands), "the Bunyoro expansion ideology"
Ndahura	"the first *Mucwezi*", "the Cattle-raider"
Nyabatama	'of those whose story came to an end', the name of the kingship drum of Karagwe
omufumu/òmùfumù/ umupfumu	'diviner', 'healer', (Rutara/North Nyanza/West Highlands)
Omukama	"the Head Milker", the title of the king (Rutara)
omu-zimu, (plur. *emi-*)	'spirit of the dead'
ruganda, (plur. *enganda*)	'clan' (Rutara)
Ruhanga	'God, the Creator' (Rutara)
Rukale	the special language of the royal enclosure (Rutara)
Ubwooko	'clan' (West Highlands)
Umwami	"something that emerged out of others and became great and special", the title of the king (West Highlands)
Wamara, from *ku-mara*, 'to finish, to complete'	1. "*Mugenyi* of *Bigo*", 2. "the last *Mucwezi*", "King of Kings and spirits" (Rutara)

1
Introduction

Background and Purpose

This book in the deepest sense tells the story of the value of the cows in the interlacustrine region, the region between the Great Lakes in East and Central Africa. The herders know the names of each cow in the herds, names that carry messages from the past sometimes enshrined in reference to colour or pattern design,[1] more seldom to horn size and shape.[2] Some population groups value certain colours or horn formations more highly than others do. In south western Uganda all the Runyankore-speaking people, the Banyankore, not only the *Bahima* cattle keepers, treasure a few types of cattle so highly that they nearly worship them. One such treasure is a cow that is born as a twin, *endongo* or *empasha*. They are rare and when they do occur they are appreciated so much that they can never be sold or given as bride-wealth because the Banyankore believe that they are signs of fortune and wealth. Due to their symbolic value of economic wellbeing for the family it happens that owners of *empasha* cows allow them to grow old, die, and be buried.[3]

The symbolic significance of cattle is a recurring theme from household to state level, again shown in the context of Uganda. The leading bull in the herd is identified with the father of the household.[4] Therefore, at the death of the head of a family his bull must be slaughtered. This custom does not only prevail on the household level of, for example the Banyankore (Karugire 1971:82) and the people living in Busoga, the Basoga (Zibondo and Laight 1934), who belong to different language groups in the region (see Table 1), it can also be found elaborated at state level in the Tooro Kingdom. In this case the specific white bull, *ente,*[5] *elikwera*, which had belonged to the deceased king, had to be ritually slaughtered near the entrance of the royal enclosure, *Mugabente*, on the morning of the installation of his heir. The new king had to pass through the entrance walking in the blood of his father's

slain bull. Then the skin of the old king's white bull was prepared to cover the drum of his successor.[6] *Ru-tale*, 'the white bull-calf' was the name of the "white cow" the diviners killed during royal installation rituals in Bunyoro (Nyakatura 1973:192).

For years I had been pondering about the religio-historical, socio-economic context and symbolic meaning of the white cow; its significance was suggested in the oral traditions I had recorded in Karagwe (Tanzania). But its prominent position in relation to kingship had not become clear to me until I had done a comparative study of written sources from Buhaya (Tanzania), Nkore and subsequently Bunyoro (Uganda) (Farelius 1978, 1989, 1996). Later on the restoration of cultural institutions in Uganda would offer new opportunities to observe ancient kingship rituals revived after decades of suppression.[7] The Ugandan Parliament under the National Resistance Movement passed the *Ebyaffe* Bill in 1993 to allow the restoration of kingdoms as cultural institutions to those groups who so desired it. *Ebyaffe*, 'those things that are ours', is a Luganda term here used to mean that now the government was ready to return to the people what was rightly theirs, i.e. their culture and identity.[8]

My excitement was great when in July the same year, on the occasion of the installation of the *Kabaka*, 'king', of the Baganda, in the middle of the enthusiastic crowd, I suddenly found myself beside a white bull-calf being brought for the traditional part of the rituals. The king-maker of the *Mamba* clan, *Ssemanobe*, had invited the heir to be seated on the bark-cloth and leopard-skin covered "non-man-made" throne, *Namulondo*, a gnarled root structure knitted in the form of a chair,[9] symbolising the link to his ancestors.[10] Then I witnessed how *Katongole*, the head of the *Ente* clan, brought the white bull-calf in front of the newly enthroned *Kabaka* Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II. *Ssemanobe* directed the *Kabaka*'s hand when he poked the calf with an iron rod that resembled a traditional farming sickle on a shaft. By performing the ritual act of touching the white bull-calf the *Kabaka* was reported to have symbolically killed "the white cow to feed the Baganda".[11] The white cow from the past came to life again as Ugandans "celebrated

the history of centralised government".[12] I had a vision that the white cow/bull-calf, as a tangible sign of the high esteem attached to cattle, represents the summary of that history. Now its ritual presence at the installation of the *Kabaka* of Buganda further confirmed my belief that it is a key-symbol with the capacity to unlock hidden historical connections and cultural values that may even go beyond boundaries of modern African States and nationalities of today. This treatise will focus on important aspects and shared cultural traits that will enrich our knowledge about the history of kingship and centralised rule in the Great Lakes region.

The purpose of this book is a historical interpretation of kingship traditions and symbolism from within the perspective of the peoples between the Great Lakes, expressed in their languages. It is my contention that "language is a most essential tool and guideline in the study through oral deductions".[13] Therefore, an overview of the current state of research in the field of African languages and the history of languages corroborated with archaeological findings is required in order to do full justice to the rich cultural diversity that has shaped interlacustrine societies of today. The potentials inherent in language have to be combined with an investigation of social structures and spiritual manifestations that developed in close interaction with prevailing common ecological conditions. Studied within this overall interdisciplinary framework a different perspective on socio-economic and political processes will shed new light on the history of interlacustrine kingship. In short, the history of centralised rule is regarded as the history of the peoples between the Great Lakes.

Outline and scope

As Beidelman (1970:77) has observed for the study of African societies, no credible historical interpretations of oral traditional data is possible, unless the social structural and ideological features of the societies under study are first explained. So before we can start decoding history from oral traditions, the ground must be thoroughly prepared. Therefore, several initial chapters are devoted to painting the picture of the interlacustrine scene, explore the state of languages and media

of communication of its actors and explicate their social and religious systems.

Chapter Two offers a general introduction to the interlacustrine region, its environment and peoples. Here I describe the main geographic and climatic conditions in the region, which have shaped the circumstances of life and subsistence of those who live there. Table 1 charts out the specific Great Lakes Bantu successor language groups of today, whose history of centralised rule is in focus. The main actors are Rutara-speaking communities, especially peoples of the old kingdoms of Bunyoro, Tooro, Nkore, Karagwe, Buhaya and Rusubi (Buzinza). Luo-speakers share a part of that history with Bantu-speakers. Hence a short overview of climatic and environmental features prevailing in the northern realm of the region is in place. The second part of the chapter deals with the problems of "tribes" and states. It seeks to elucidate how external perceptions of ethnicity have contributed to misleading conclusions regarding the social and historical process of state formation in the region.

Attention now turns to the problems of historiography and research strategy. Chapter Three is devoted to an overview of the extensive literature that exists about the *Bacwezi*, "the powerful figures with one foot among the gods and one foot among the world of man" (Cohen 1968:651). When the reports of the first explorers in the nineteenth century had been digested, subsequent colonial and missionary writers connected the *Bacwezi* hero spirits with the origin of kingship. Foreign observers associated the *Bacwezi* with the so-called Hamitic invaders they thought had brought kingship and "civilised" rule to the region. In line with the trends of the times the *Bacwezi* problem has taken on various directions. When throwing out the "myth" of the Hamite, scholars tended to dismiss the *Bacwezi* as a human dynasty and dispatch them to the invisible world or the world of spirits. Chapter Three ends up with a section that proposes possible avenues for the search for a solution to the *Bacwezi* problem. Here lies the clue for a new understanding of the interlacustrine history of centralised rule. The search to disentangle the *Bacwezi* riddle will be guided by a number of

precepts that have matured during my study of the oral evidence given in the local languages of the peoples concerned. Those languages may provide ways to uncover the past.

Therefore, I set out Chapter Four on "Languages and the History of Languages in the Great Lakes Region" by discussing problems of historical linguistic methods. This chapter is technical in nature but provides a necessary background to our awareness about the multi-faceted cultural interactions that have shaped interlacustrine societies of today. I proceed by accounting for the proposed early settlers in areas presently populated by Bantu-speaking language communities in the region. From a general perspective of the African continent I account for estimated time depth, known cultural characteristics and possible archaeological attributions of the Central Sudanic, Eastern Sahelian and Southern Cushitic-speakers that according to current research results may have preceded or co-existed with Bantu-speakers. Those settlers, belonging to branches of the Nilo-Saharan and Afro-Asiatic language phyla, are suggested to have left traces behind in the form of loanwords discernible in Bantu languages spoken today. Great Lakes Bantu-speakers spread eastwards gradually to settle in the region from around 500 BC. After more than a millennium of settlement and interaction previous settlers absorbed the languages of the Great Lakes Bantu successor communities. In the process the Bantu-speakers assimilated cultural traits of those they superseded. Located in moist environments, the intermediate West Nyanza and Western Lakes speech communities fall within the range of the settlement period. The roots of clan traditions may be traced back to that time (Schoenbrun 1990:255).

Chapter Five treats problems dealing with "Environment, clans and beliefs". The purpose of the chapter is to show that Bantu-speaking peoples' clan system between the Lakes constitutes dynamic social formations shaped over time and space in close interaction with the physical environment. The environment also gave form to religious beliefs that arose within the contextual framework of the clan system. The main focus of attention is the Rutara language group, one of the two successor speech communities of the intermediate West

Nyanza.[14] Regarded as an original migration group irrespective of blood relationship (Buchanan 1974) the clan serves as a reference category rather than a family unit. The operative social unit remains the sub-clan or lineage (Table 2). Clan names and symbols of identification, primary and secondary totems, form part of the collective naming system of these peoples. One section of the chapter is devoted to an examination of the religious form in family, clan and state. Finally, there is an exposition of beliefs and perceptions related to the placenta and twin births. This investigation involves Bantu- as well as Luo-speakers.

Chapter Six, "God and Spirits, Clans and Kings in Beliefs and Traditions", mainly seeks to investigate the interrelationships between God, the Creator, and the material and immaterial world. This discussion is based on evidence from members of all the three Bantu-speaking language groups of today that are relevant to the study. Testimonies given by Rutara-speaking representatives are being compared with information from North Nyanza and West Highlands speakers. Clans of important ritual functions in some of the southern kingdoms are associated with ancestors reflecting symbolism associated with fishing, hunting and iron-working. Distinctive features such as material characteristics, spiritual manifestations and ritual contents pertaining to these clans may mirror conditions that could have prevailed during the period of cultural fusion perhaps as early as around 700 AD or even earlier. Possibly with roots dating back to the intermediate West Nyanza period, in Bunyoro, ancestors of the *Bagabo* ruling clan are given names of the Creator. A comparative regional study of the *Bagabo* clan and one salient symbol of identification can shed light on the problem whether they should be regarded as kings or not. A Kihaya tradition told in a much later regional context validates the dynastic claim that kingship originated in Bunyoro, perceived as "the centre of creation".

Next follows a suggested reconstruction of the role of interlacustrine kings, departing from a testimony from Buhaya. Chapter Seven treats problems related to the position of the king as co-ordinator of political and spiritual agencies. What was the key role of the king within the context of the interlacustrine belief system? In what terms could the prerogative powers attributed to kings be formulated? What happened

when kings in the past exceeded the limits of their stipulated rights? A tradition told in Karagwe starts off a discussion dealing with ways of popular resistance against power abuse. The corrective spiritual presence of the most powerful royal ancestors manifested itself in the ultimate symbol of authority, the kingship drum.

Chapter Eight, entitled "Cattle, Kings and Aristocracy", begins with a short recapitulation of the long-standing scholarly debate on the issue of cattle and kingship. Did specialised pastoralism develop internally or by cattle-owning strangers? Did those strangers introduce kingship to the region? The Karagwe ritual and socio-economic context of the white cow can provide clues for a deeper understanding of kingship and its relation to cattle. A section on the state of *Bacwezi* research is in place, here from the specific context of archaeology in Western Uganda. Now the question is whether it is possible to extract historical information from oral traditions about the *Bacwezi* in relation to Ugandan archaeological remains, notably *Bigo bya Mugenyi.* How come that a tradition told in the Buhaya ancient kingdom of Ihangiro can provide a possible starting-point for the understanding of the socio-economic and historical context of the *Bigo* scenario? Did the *Bacwezi* exist as a ruling dynasty? And how did those who came to be called *Bahima* /*Bahuma* come into the picture? A body of oral traditions on the Milk Test theme emanating from "the Bunyoro centre of creation" will be found historically informative on the issue of social stratification not only in Rutara-speaking communities but also among West Highland-speakers.

The Bunyoro centre is the focus of Chapter Nine enacted in the domain of interaction between the material and immaterial world, where the diviners set the tune. "Diviners, Kings and *bacwezi* spirits" is the title. How do we interpret Kinyoro traditions explaining the ancestry of *Isimbwa*, the alleged progenitor of a *Bacwezi* genealogy? A problem to be addressed here concerns the historical context that may have brought forth traditions about the *Babiito* "twin brothers" *Isingoma Rukidi* and *Kato Kimera.* What historical realities can be proposed for the persona *Ndahura*, allegedly the first *Mucwezi* king, who became feared as the spirit of smallpox? And why could *Ndahura*'s mother, *Nyinamwiru,* be

regarded as the prototype of *Nyina Omukama*, 'Mother of the Head Milker'? How do the Luo-speaking Acholi fit into the picture? Which underlying motive may have urged the *Babiito* court-historians to recall their history in terms of an alleged empire, the Bunyoro-Kitara? I look for historical interpretations of the emergence of the *Bacwezi/Embandwa* spirit mediumship cult linked to kingship ideology primarily among Rutara and West Highland-speaking peoples but the investigation also includes Luo-speakers as well as aspects of North Nyanza speech communities' culture. Finally, problems surrounding *Wamara*, "the last *Mucwezi*" and "King of Kings" will be elaborated from within the perceptual framework of Rutara-speaking peoples' clan-based belief system.

This is the first religio-ecological, historical-linguistic study that attempts to address the problem of centralised rule in the Great Lakes region. The enigmatic *Bacwezi* will be dealt with from within as broad a context as possible, spiritual, socio-economic and political. One advantage gained by a critical integration of historical-linguistic research results is that we get new terminology with capacity to identify interlacustrine peoples as dynamic language communities that have moved over time and space. It is an open secret that preconceived ideas about tribal or ethnic identities have mystified the self-understanding of the peoples between the lakes.[15] The present approach will hopefully expose a rich cultural unity in diversity extending the boundaries between the various language communities living in the region today. Perhaps they will realise that they have more in common than they believe.

Endnotes

1 For cattle markings among the Banyankore and the Bakiga in south-western Uganda see Taylor's dictionary, Appendix III, 1959:205.

2 Information from Mzee Israel Katuuka, Nyabushozi, Mbarara District, 28/3 1992. Research Notes File, 3: Cattle and herding.

3 Information from Ambassador Dr Tibamanya Mwene Mushanga, Itendero Village, Shema County, Mbarara District, 12/11 1992. Research Notes File, 3: Cattle and herding.

4 1/4 1992 an appointment with Mzee Kashillingi in Rukungiri had to be cancelled because of sickness. We were told that when the head of the household was sick, his bull, *enumi y'embikira*, 'the leading bull of the herd' was also sick.

5 The meaning of the word for cow, *en-te*, 'head of cattle' in Runyoro, Rutooro, Runyankore, Rukiga, Kikerebe, Ruzinza, Luhaya and Runyambo as well as Luganda embraces both bulls and cows (cf. Schoenbrun 1997:68). However, *ente* is generally used for 'cow', while for example the Banyankore/Bakiga word for 'bull' is *enimi/enumi* (Taylor 1959:154). So the generic denomination for cattle is expressed in the basically female term *ente*. This linguistic usage confirms often-heard statements that Great Lakes Bantu-speakers treasure the cow as the source of life because of the milk.

6 Information from Mzee Ibona Sezi, *Omweganya*, 'spear keeper' and hereditary keeper of the Karambi royal tombs of Tooro, BFFM:1069, 1996.

7 Under colonial administration the kingdoms in the Bantu-speaking area of Uganda had been reduced to five more or less authentic units: Bunyoro, Toro, Ankole, Buganda and Busoga. In 1966 President Milton Obote decided to attack the palace of the then Buganda king, *Kabaka* Mutesa II, who at that time also held the office of the ceremonial Presidency since 1963. The king managed to escape to England, where he later died. The following year saw the abolition of kingdoms in Uganda and Obote made himself executive President of the Republic. (For more details see for example Ray 1991:5.) In Tanzania the administrative and political role of kings had been abolished in 1963, two years after independence, but there they were not denied a role of purely cultural function as honorary chiefs (Hydén 1969:133). Despite this fact I was told that those who belonged to the formerly ruling dynasty in the then West Lake region experienced it as a stigma.

8 Muhereza and Otim (1998:19-194) have a discussion about the restoration of traditional rulers in the context of ethnicity and politics in Uganda.

9 "History, meaning of Buddo coronation", *The New Vision*, Saturday, July 31, 1993:11.

10 Personal information from *Ssemanobe* at Bulange, the Buganda Parliament, Kampala, 15/2 1994.

11 Notes from Uganda Television News coverage, July 31 1993, BFFN/8:12.

12 Quote from a speech read by the President of the Republic of Uganda, H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni at the occasion of the restoration of the kingdom of Tooro, UTV transmission 3/8 1993, BFFN/8:21.

13 Quote from Lloyd A. Binagi's letter to the Editor, re: "Basuba, Baganda and the Abhakuria", *Africa, Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 49, No. 4, 1979:418.

14 The two Great Lakes Bantu successor language groups of the West Nyanza of relevance for this study are Rutara above and North Nyanza. The present Baganda and Basoga belong to the North Nyanza (Schoenbrun 1990:134 and 1998:167).

15 The problem of cultural alienation has been recognised by scholars in the region and a research programme to address it was worked out in the Report of the First Workshop of IRREC (Interlacustrine Regional Research Centre), Kampala, 1990.

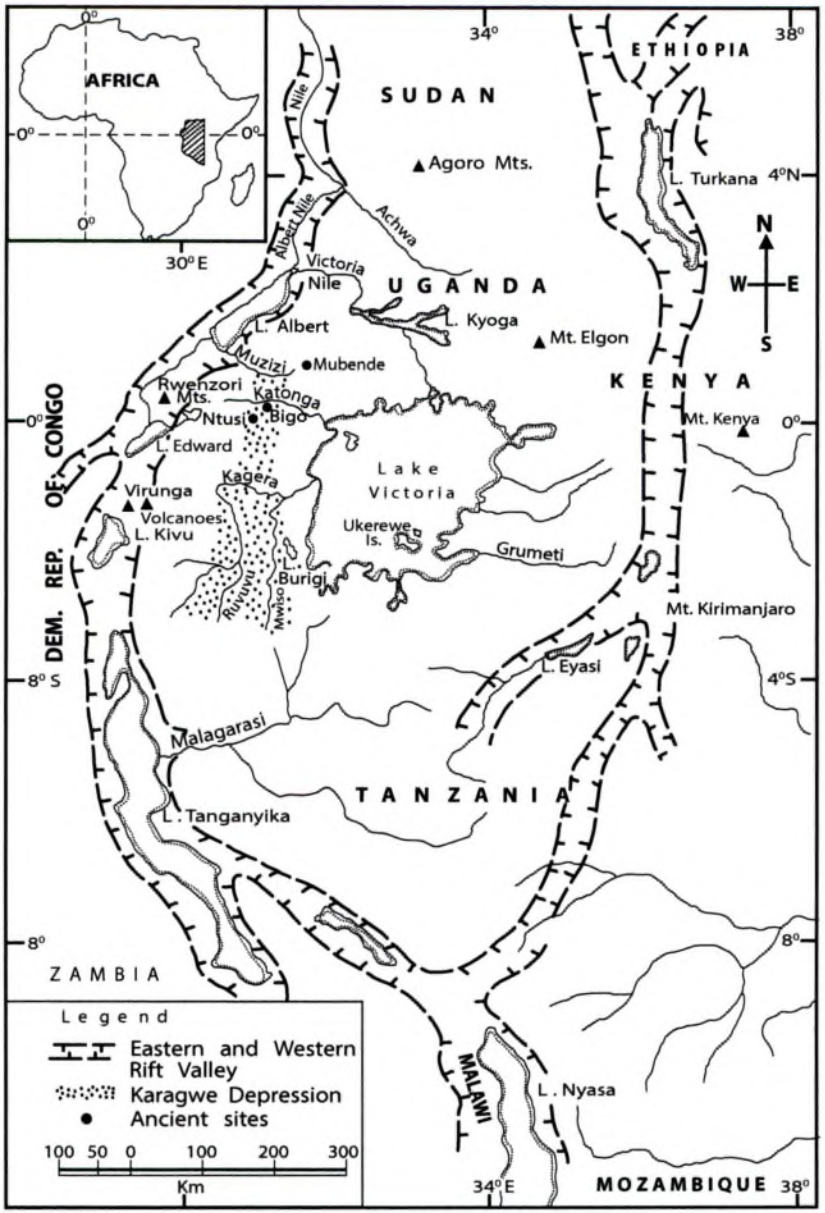

Figure 2. Topographical map of the extended Great Lakes Region

2
The Interlacustrine Region: Environment and Societies

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the general physical and demographic landscape of the region between the lakes in East and Central Africa, to paint the picture of the interlacustrine lands and peoples. As I describe the environment and its inherent potentials for migration and settlement, some first impressions of the way ecological features influence beliefs and spiritual manifestations emerge. The second section of the chapter brings up problems of so-called "tribes" and states. The "tribal model" projected from outside on interlacustrine societies does not stand the test of scrutiny from inside the socio-economic, political and linguistic contexts that may have prevailed by the end of the nineteenth century.

The Environment and the Peoples

The lands of the East African interior lying astride the Equator rest on the high plateau between the Eastern and Western Rift Valleys, great splits in the African continent from the Red Sea to Mozambique, covering a distance of over 4000 kilometres. The Rift Valleys "have played a remarkable role in the movement and settlement of peoples" (Diarra 1981:320) in Africa. The rifts gave birth to a series of lakes, including lakes Nyasa (Malawi/Tanzania/ Mozambique), Tanganyika (Congo/Burundi/ Tanzania/Zambia), Kivu (Congo/Rwanda), Edward, Albert (Congo/Uganda), Turkana (Kenya) and Stephanie (Ethiopia). The region encircled by these lakes and beyond would in its broadest interpretation be included in the Great Lakes region. Scholars dealing with the area inhabited by two descendant language communities of the Great Lakes Bantu[1] would narrow the scope of the term interlacustrine to designate an area between and around lakes Albert, Edward, Kivu, Victoria, Kyoga and the northern part of Lake Tanganyika (Schoenbrun 1990:9).[2] To do full justice to "the richness of interaction among African peoples" (1979a:19) the view northwards expands to the areas of the

present Luo-speakers. This area extends from the immediate south of the Victoria Nile, from Pawir in northern Bunyoro to the lands lying around and beyond the Agoro mountains and the Didinga hills[3].

Plate 2. The wrinkled mountain ranges of Karagwe

Gigantic volcanic mountains border the Rift Valleys. Along the western rift in the Uganda, Rwanda and Congo borderlands the majestic Virunga Volcanoes tower to 4500 m above sea level, still actively erupting. *Bazimu*, 'spirits of the dead', reside there (Rugyema 1983:IX). When the air has cleared after heavy rains their cones can be seen from a distance of at least 200 kilometres, from the wrinkled mountain ranges of Karagwe, running in a SSW and NNE direction (Katoke 1975:2). To the west and southwest, in Rwanda and Burundi, the relief takes on similar characteristics of "a much dissected highland" (Baker 1963:6). These mountain ranges, between 1300-2170 m high, extend north into the former district of Ankole, since 1986 called Mbarara in Uganda.[4]

Farther north the kingdom of Tooro lies on the foothills of the Ruwenzori massif, popularly known as the Mountains of the Moon, its highest snow-capped peak is over 5000 m high. The massif "is unique among the major mountains of East Africa, in that it is not composed of young volcanics, but of rock material of pre-Cambrian age", the same material that constitutes the Karagwe-Ankolean system (Baker 1963:6-7). Nevertheless, a number of

shallow craters and crater lakes in the area bordering the Ruwenzori bear witness to volcanic activities.[5] One of these lakes, just south of Tooro, provides the natural basis of the Lake Katwe salt industry (Baker 1963:7). Then there are hot-springs on the valley bottom west of the Ruwenzori. In Karagwe the hot-springs of Mutagata attracted the attention of early travellers (C.H.B. Grant 1947). In 1980 the present researcher found a local doctor, *omutambi*, there who attended to all the patients having come from near and far, believing in the healing powers of the hot well-water.

Again, from the horizon of the Karagwe mountains facing west towards Rwanda stretch the broad and papyrus-covered valley of the Kagera. This river is the parent branch of the Nile, the longest river in Africa, which covers a distance of 6700 kilometres until it empties into the Mediterranean (Diarra 1981:328). From its sources in Burundi and Rwanda the Kagera flows in a north-north westerly direction along a chain of lakes forming the border to Rwanda until it makes a sharp bend eastwards. There it continues for some 20 kilometres as the borderline between Karagwe and the former Ugandan district of Ankole, more specifically the part of Ankole that once had belonged to the kingdom of Mpororo during its short period of expansion (Karugire 1971:274). The Kagera then encircles Karagwe at the foot of its eastern mountain range, now forming the borderline of the Bukoba district. Before it arrives at Lake Victoria, also called Nyanza or *Lweru,* 'the white or glittering', waters from river systems of the eastern plain drain into it. This plain is the Mwisa-Burigi, which runs all along the Karagwe mountain ridges to the east, separating the Karagwe highlands from the hills and ridges of the Bukoba and Muleba districts. From Lake Burigi southwards lies the low plateau of the former kingdom of Buzinza in Biharamulo district. The people living in the former kingdom of Rusubi, a smaller unit of the original Buzinza kingdom around the town of Biharamulo are part of a larger group of people, who all call themselves Bazinza and inhabit the area around the south-western shores of Lake Victoria (Betbeder 1971:1-2 and Bjerke 1981:1).[6] The former kingdom of Bushuubi shares the low plateau of the Bazinza as it extends westwards. Just north of Bushuubi lies the ancient kingdom of the Bahangaza, Bugufi (Ngara), a small highland on the border of Burundi between the river Kagera and its tributary Ruvuvu. The whole region in the north-western corner of Tanzania has been named after the source river of the Nile: the Kagera.[7]

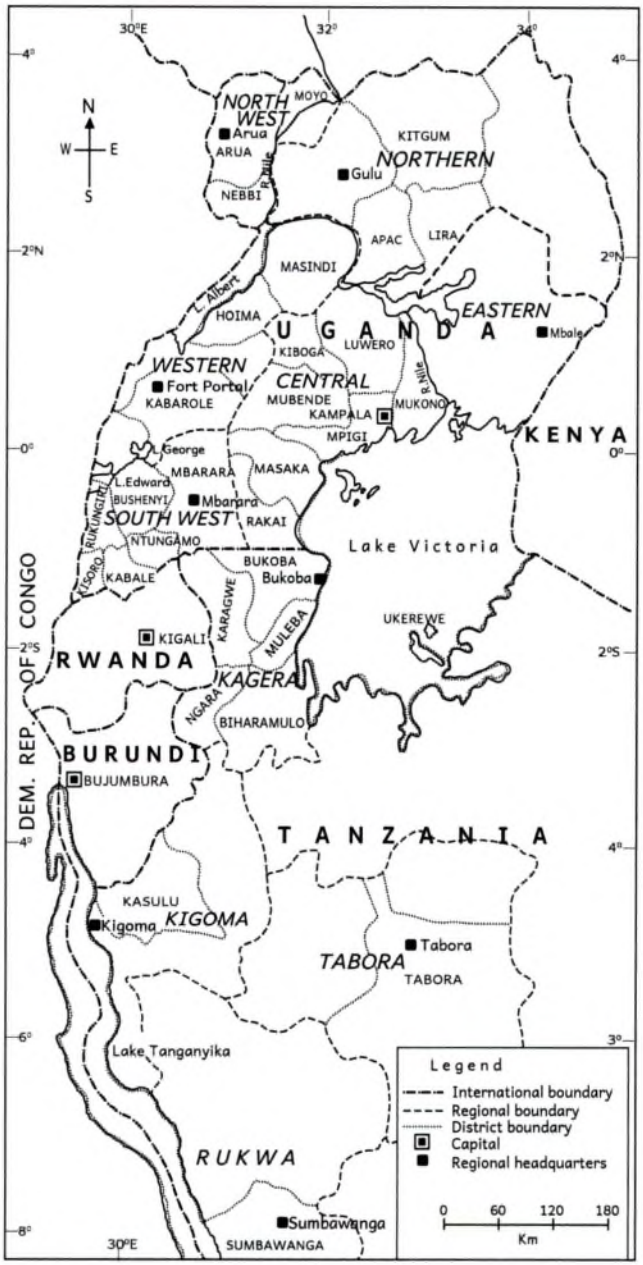

Figure 3. Administrative map

The ancient kingdom of Heru is also of concern to this study, one of six social formations of the Baha people (Mbwiliza 1979:103) occupying the highlands of Kasulu district, Kigoma region, in some places attaining an altitude of 2000m above sea level. Here the main drainage system is effected by the Malagarasi river, which describes the kingdom's boundary with Burundi.

The Mwisa-Burigi plain separating Karagwe and the lands of the old Buhaya kingdoms in Bukoba and Muleba districts are "part of a larger dry zone which stretches across the country from south-west to north, joining the dry belt of eastern Nkore and western Masaka up to Bunyoro in Uganda" (Katoke 1975:2).[8] This dry zone of "rolling gallery forest and woody savannah" (Schoenbrun 1990:10) extending at intervals over parts of the interlacustrine interior, forms a corridor from south-west to north-east, which Schoenbrun (1990:7, Map 1) calls the Karagwe depression. He places the southern end of the corridor to the west of the Karagwe mountain range, in the Lower Kagera valley (cf. Katoke 1975:2). In a wider sense one could include in the same ecological system the Mwisa-Burigi plain on the eastern side (Baker 1963:8), possibly extending down towards the drier low plateau of Rusubi (Buzinza) and Bushuubi. This is the kind of bio-geographical area where wildlife finds favourable living conditions; hunting is good and farming and stock-raising possible (Diarra 1981:331).

The road from Bukoba to Karagwe, before climbing the escarpment of the Karagwe mountain range, passes through the plains of the Mwisa-Burigi, an open savannah landscape, where wild game was a common sight as recently as the 1950s. More recently, cattle herds would delay travellers on the road, livestock from the Kitengule Ranch, and the vast maize fields of the Prison farm would catch the eye. Elsewhere, some of Karagwe's best grazing grounds would be found in the Lower Kagera valley, on the plains of Siina in the Northwest. This is not far from the traditionally prominent cattle kingdoms of Nkore, Rwanda and Mpororo, before the latter split up. The Bahororo now live in Ntungamo (formerly Ankole) and Rukungiri (formerly Kigezi) districts, where the open countryside is suitable for extensive pastoralism (Denoon 1972:7). Sharing similar ecological features, Karagwe was well known in the past for its great

cattle herds. Schoenbrun implicitly emphasises the centrality of Karagwe to the region as a whole in naming a geological feature stretching far beyond the limits of the ancient kingdom the Karagwe depression (Cf. Baker 1963:14). It is along this drier corridor that we find Uganda's famous archaeological remains, the legendary *Bigo bya Mugenyi*, 'the cattle enclosures of the stranger', and *Ntusi*, just south of the Katonga River in western Masaka district. Here and in eastern Mbarara, formerly Ankole district, there is a "vegetation of short grass, scattered acacias and euphorbias with ubiquitous thicket-covered termite mounds" (Baker 1963:18). Parts of this area now constitute some of the driest savannahs in the whole of the interlacustrine region with a mean annual rainfall of below 750 mm.[9]

In nearly all the equatorial region, which refers to the narrower interlacustrine area, there are two more or less reliable rain seasons. The longer and heavier rains fall from March to May followed by the long dry season up to some time in October. Then the short rains start, usually falling up to December, after which period the short dry season begins, when the farmers prepare the fields for the next long rain season (Baker 1963:10-11).

The whole of the East African plateau shows a close connection between rainfall and relief, higher areas having more precipitation than the lower plains and river valleys. The highlands of the western rift have good rains, well distributed over the year, with annual totals of 1500 mm and above. The favourable situation that prevails here is created partly because of evapotranspiration from neighbouring Congo. The high altitudes of the ridge tops lower temperatures, which also decreases evaporation (Baker 1963:10, 14). The lands of Ruwenzori, where Tooro lies, enjoy good rains. This is also the case for parts of the former Kigezi district in the south-western corner of Uganda, especially Kisoro and Kabale districts, and some portions of Rwanda and Burundi. These well-watered areas of Kisoro, Kabale, Rwanda and Burundi sustain some of the densest rural populations in Africa.[10] Here the Bakiga clans populating the terraced hills in Kabale stand out as resolutely independent and "republican" (Kamuhangire 1993:266, note 44). However, the small *Banyangoma* states in Kinkizi, Rukungiri, north of Kabale and Kisoro have retained the

concept of the drum as power symbol. The highland climate is generally pleasant and cool. In Karagwe the rainfall is moderate but much less than that of Bukoba. This is because of the rain shadow presented by the ridges along the shorelines of Lake Victoria (D.N. McMaster 1961:81).

The lake creates "maritime" conditions that benefit the lands marginal to it, especially to the west, north and north-east. Accordingly, Bukoba town and surroundings enjoy good rainfall, only exceeded by the amount on the islands and shores of Buganda (Baker 1963:13). Near the lake rain usually falls in scattered showers all the year round.[11] The correspondence between abundant rainfall and population density is clear here, more markedly so on the northern and north-western shores, the territory east of the Nile, Busoga, and the realm of the Buganda heart lands. At the south-eastern corner of the lake the island and Tanzanian peninsula of Bukerebe (Ukerewe) receive abundant rainfall. This area stands out in comparison to its less fortunate neighbours in part of the Kenyan province of Victoria Nyanza.[12] The lower altitudes around the lake contribute to increased temperatures compared to the highlands, except for the strips of land along the shore, which are cooled by the refreshing winds from the lake.

The vegetation characteristic of the Lake Victoria zone of Buganda and its continuation southwards into Bukoba is the "high-grass low-tree formation" where the grass is of the *Pennesetum purpureum* (elephant grass) type (Baker 1963:18). This is the species of reed that was traditionally used to build palisades and fences around the interlacustrine kings' enclosures. The old coronation site of the *Kabaka*, the Baganda kings, at Buddo hill was prepared for the coronation of Kabaka Ronald Mwenda Mutebi II on July 31, 1993, by representatives of the Baganda clans, who polished thousands of reeds with crushed sugarcane in grass to prepare the palisades and fences. In the low-lying lands of this type the wild date palm, *omukindo*, *Phoenix reclinata* (Davis 1938/1952:182), provides weaving-material for mats and partitions inside the traditional houses.

In Buganda the present appearance of the landscape has to a large extent been shaped by the activities of man as a cultivator. There is a pattern of shorter grass vegetation on the plateau tops, richer grass and woodland on the valley sides and swamp forest and swamp in the valley

bottoms, here and there intercepted by large, isolated trees used for timber (Baker 1963:18). The hills in Buganda and the Bukoba area have supported vast numbers of banana groves for as much as a millennium (Schoenbrun 1993b:41). Baganda experts pound and treat the bark of the *omutuba*[13] tree (cf. Matovu 1995:147) until it becomes silk like, still used in the region for ritual robes and shrouds. The Bahaya are also bark-cloth makers, and they call their bark-cloth tree the *omutoma*.[14]

Similar ecological conditions prevail in the Bukoba district, where the ridge top can be seen as a "sub-environmental zone or as an *ecotone*– an ecologically intermediate area or a point of tension between two environments" (Schmidt 1978:19). The ridge top ecotone here allows its dwellers to exploit the resources of the adjacent ecologies of swamps and lakes, or swamps on both sides. Papyrus, *ekifunjo*, is an important crop of the swamps and *ekifunjo* is harvested for its white pulp, *eshisha* (Schmidt 1978:18). *Eshisha* occurs in important oral traditions and is used in crucial homestead rituals (Farelius 1978:10, 45).[15]

The characteristic topographical pattern of the green and undulating landscape of "upland Bunyoro" (Beattie 1971:11) differs little from that of Buganda and Bukoba. There are clearly bounded areas of more or less raised ground, separated from each other by swampy streams, often strewn with papyrus. These raised areas or ridges are called *migongo* (sing. *mu-gongo*) in all Great Lakes Bantu languages. *Mugongo* originally meant 'spine', the changed meaning relating to the new environment Bantu-speakers encountered on reaching the western rift.[16] The upland Bunyoro ridges do not rise as high as the ridge-tops in Bukoba, and rise from a generally lower altitude. Therefore the climate is also hotter with mean annual maximum temperatures between 27.5-30.0 degrees Centigrade (Social Studies Atlas 1988:18).

North of the Victoria Nile lies the region of the Luo-speaking population of Uganda. The gallery forest of the savannah astride the river has been set aside as one of the most famous national parks in East Africa, named after the Bunyoro hero, king Kabalega. South of the Nile lay the ancient state of Palwo (Webster 1979b:124) or Pa-Luo (p'Bitek 1971:17), an area alternately designated as Pawir (Ogot 1967:55) or Kibanda (p'Bitek 1971:8). As will be clarified later, these place-names

reflect the historical scenario of the Bantu/Luo borderland area in north eastern Bunyoro. Some of the Luo-speaking clans later would move north, finally to settle in their present homes in what is now Kitgum district, formerly called Acholi.

Those people are Central Luo and a significant percentage of them now live on the central northern interlacustrine plateau, which is "a rolling, somewhat monotonous surface" lying approximately 1100-1160 m above sea level (Herring 1979:84). Scattered hills, which as in Bunyoro may be historical landmarks of spiritual significance, intercept the plain. The borderland towards the Sudan is flanked by a series of mountain ranges, for example the legendary peaks of the Agoro Mountains (cf. Onyango-ku-Odongo 1976 and Webster 1979).

The northern interlacustrine region is part of a wider continental climatic and biogeographical zone, described as "orchard bush". It is an environment "somewhat lower, somewhat moister" than the East African open highland savannahs. Here the shade from a variety of broad-leaved trees provides relief from the scorching heat of the sun. This kind of country "spreads out westwards from northern Uganda all the way to the Senegal" (Oliver 1991:16-17). Therefore, the northernmost interlacustrine region is part of a different rainfall regime from that of the equatorial pattern of two rainy seasons and two dry seasons per year. The "beginnings of the regime of the inner tropics of the Northern Hemisphere are marked by the coalescence of the rainy seasons and by the consequent development of a single dry season" (Baker 1963:12). Such conditions prevail with some variations in the Luo areas. Although there is reasonably good rainfall over much of plateau Uganda, the accentuation of the hot, dry season contributes to the comparatively high rates of evaporation. Therefore even short periods of unseasonable drought in areas with less reliable rainfall could have calamitous consequences for farmers. As stressed by Herring (1979:85), the factor of rainfall reliability must have been of crucial importance for the ultimate settlement pattern of the Luo.

In the present section we drew the barest outline of the main features of the interlacustrine environment, the aspects of the mountains, hills, valleys and plains and their relations to lakes and rivers. This is the

world, peopled wave upon wave, and gradually domesticated that is the setting for this book.

Problems of "Tribes" and States

The interlacustrine societies evolved according to the conditions and potentials that environmental circumstances allowed. For a proper understanding of the pre-industrial societies in the region, it is clear that we have to look at them from inside, as expressed in terms of the languages used by the peoples concerned.

It is no exaggeration to say that preconceived ideas framed by western scholarship about ethnicity and so-called "tribes" have distorted the reality behind interlacustrine social structures. Igor Kopytoff (1989:4) has correctly remarked that "the tribal model" is rather a projection of European self-perception rooted in nineteenth-century European ideas than a valid term in the African context. Colonial administrations made up "ethnic groups" where none had been before (Buchanan 1978:410, cf. Ranger 1983/1995:248). Okot p'Bitek's chapter "What is tribe?" from his *African Religions in Western Scholarship* illustrates how "tribal" units in Uganda were moulded. British officials created the Acholi "tribe" by uniting some thirty independent Luo-speaking groups (1970:12-13). Arab travellers from the north gave the name Acholi, perhaps a corruption of *Collo*, the dominant clan of the Shilluk in the Sudan (p'Bitek 1971:3, 31) to these clans during the eighteenth century. The Acholi people live in the Northern districts of Gulu and Kitgum. Another example of colonial social engineering lies to the east of the Nile, where a number of closely related principalities were fused to create the kingdom of Busoga (Buchanan 1978:410 and cf. Mwamula-Lubandi 1978).

Nkore is the name of the former kingdom. *Ankole* was the name of a larger unit the British created in south western Uganda, comprising of the kingdom of Nkore together with surrounding kingdoms (Morris 1962:32-38 and Karugire 1971:33). Two of these former kingdoms concern this study, Buhweju and Igara. The mountainous kingdom of Buhweju had historical links to Bunyoro while Igara, strategically situated across the salt route to Lakes Edward and Albert (Kamuhangire

1993:243), was a successor state of the *Bashambo* of Mpororo. *Ankole* is a British corruption of *Nkore*, whose population does not use the consonant "l", but "r".[17] From 1986 that area was divided into the three districts of Mbarara, Bushenyi and Ntungamo. The people living in these districts are the *Banyankore*, speakers of the *Runyankore* language (Table 1).

To the south of Ankole, the people of Karagwe in the former Tanganyika were placed under the heading of "The Haya" in, for example, Audrey Richard's volume on *East African Chiefs* (1959:174-194). The Bahaya proper were basically fishing people,[18] whom the first Europeans had found along Lake Victoria.[19] However, it was recognised that the inhabitants of Karagwe, the Banyambo, were not to be "considered as pure Bahaya because of the strong Rundi element" (Cory 1949:13). As has been pointed out in a more recent work, the Karagwe area is separate from the Bukoba area "in terms of geology, climate, vegetation, population density and economy" (Schmidt 1978:12).[20] In this study I will use Buhaya for the old kingdoms to the west of Lake Victoria in the present Bukoba and Muleba districts: Kiziba, Bugabo, Kyamutwara, Maruku, Kianja, Ihangiro and Missenyi (from British colonial times, cf. Cory 1949).[21] Four of these former kingdoms are directly involved in the present study, namely Kiziba, Kyamutwara, Kianja and Ihangiro (Appendix I).

In the afore-mentioned Buhaya kingdoms ideology remained focussed on a specific cow (cf. Anacleti and Ndagala 1981:149). However, a fundamental difference developed in the high rainfall area closer to the lake. In the kingdoms of Buhaya power evolved around the ownership of cultivable land; in Karagwe power evolved around cattle ownership (Katoke 1975:36, Anacleti and Ndagala 1981:154). In the *Nyarubanja* land tenure system in Buhaya, the kings could confiscate banana plantations and then confer them on his favourites or relatives. The original occupants, who could have been clan heads, were allowed to stay on as tenants, the landlords enjoying the tribute from their labour. This system did not exist in Karagwe (see for example Cory and Hartnoll 1945:123-124 and Ishumi 1971:724).

In the former kingdom of Nkore, the pastoral *Bahima* and the agricultural *Bairu* tend to lead separate lives. The old *Bashambo* principality of Rujumbura,[22] Rukungiri district, is situated in the former Kigezi district, later divided into Rukungiri, Kabale and Kisoro in Uganda. The *Bashambo* were also cattle keepers. The Bakiga of Kigezi terraced the hillsides and developed an economy that supported a remarkably dense population, which could well have supported state superstructure but they chose egalitarianism. In Rwanda, the *Batutsi* cattle-owning patrons received labour and agricultural produce from their *Bahutu* clients in exchange for protection and cattle products within the system of *ubuhake* (Maquet 1961:129-142). Similar conditions prevailed in Burundi, where the *bugabire* system regulated relations between *Batutsi* cattle owners and *Bahutu* agriculturalists (Mworoha et al. 1987:175). The old kingdom of Bugufi (Bahangaza people) can be seen both geographically and ethnographically as an extension of the Burundi highlands. Here the pastoral group is called *Batusi*, not *Batutsi* (Hall and Cory 1947:28).[23]

South of Burundi, in the present district of Kigoma, Tanzania, the Heru kingdom of the Baha people is exhibiting similar socio-economic relationships (Gwassa and Mbwiliza 1976). Therefore, the so called "Rundi element", to which Rwanda belongs, implied a closer connection as regards political and socio-economic structures between Karagwe and the neighbouring highland populations, now separated by national boundaries, than to the Bahaya. Nevertheless, for the purposes of colonial administrative expediency, Karagwe was categorised as part of the Bahaya "tribe" under Bukoba District, although their socio-economic structures, their cultures and their languages differ. In fact, Buhaya and Karagwe have been characterised as "almost two different countries in one region" (J. Kibira 1974:11).

The Luhaya spoken by the Bahaya and the Runyambo of the Banyambo of Karagwe are treated as dialects of one language belonging to the Rutara group of Great Lakes Bantu successor languages (Table 1). Possibly owing to the interactions with the Bukoba colonial administration and a continuous influx of settlers from Buhaya to Karagwe that has continued up to the present,[24] researchers like Schoenbrun (1990:134)

concluded that Runyambo was more closely related to Luhaya than to Runyankore. However, a Munyambo linguist's results do not support this conclusion. Bashungwa's (1988) research suggests there is a closer affinity between Runyambo and Runyankore than between Runyambo and Luhaya.[25] Moreover, Karagwe and Buhaya traditionally had different political systems; the kingdom of Karagwe, which the colonialists found in place, had more in common with Nkore than with the Buhaya kingdoms.

As far as power related to cattle ownership, Karagwe shared that system with the highland populations of Nkore, Rwanda and Burundi, although the two latter ones belong to a different speech community, the West Highlands. The socio-economic system based on the movable property of cattle as means to exert political power developed in areas suitable for cattle. In contrast, cultivable land could be monopolised in Buhaya, which shares ecological factors with Buganda and Busoga. The *Nyarubanja* system in Buhaya had its equivalent in Buganda, where a land owning ruling class depended for their subsistence on the *bakopi* peasantry.[26] Cultural and economic parameters transcend linguistic differences; Luganda and Lusoga are classified as part of the North Nyanza language group, while Luhaya is a Rutara sub-branch.

Although Karagwe and Buhaya had different economic bases and political systems, they have underlying cultural traits in common. The comparison of the clan structure and patterns of clan interaction in this study will reveal an underlying homogeneity and an undercurrent of shared history that can be extended to the interlacustrine region at large.

It should be clear that the term "tribe" does not do justice to the social reality of the interlacustrine past. The complicated composition of political, socio-economic, cultural and linguistic factors that characterise those communities do not fit into any conformist idea inherent to "tribe". Therefore, the present work will employ nationality[27] or the interlacustrine equivalent *ihanga*.[28] But a mere correction of terminology without further reservations could lead to a subconscious retention of the very notion of "tribe", a notion that has "[...] embedded itself in popular and scholarly thought". The idea of "tribe" implied "a collectivity within whose boundaries one found a uniform 'breed' or 'race' (as the term

was understood before modern biology gave it an exclusively genetic meaning)" (Kopytoff 1989:4). For the African context "as elsewhere, the conjunction within a 'tribe' of physique, language, custom, polity and group-identity is the rare exception rather than the rule" (ibid). The word "ethnicity" covers the same concept, but "ethnicity" is equally problematic and for the same reason.

In the case of the Karagwe kingdom, the language community of the Banyambo, speaking Runyambo, would constitute a nationality within the modern nation of Tanzania. The Luhaya language community, however, does not conform to one single Buhaya nation state, but divides into seven kingdoms. Each one of these kingdoms, as well as the Karagwe kingdom of the Banyambo subgroup, all of them belonging to the Rutara Bantu-speakers (Table 1), traditionally comprised "[...] a unit for defence, trade and political purposes" (Osogo 1970:34). Obviously this quoted definition of state carries more connotations of politics than of ethnicity. The state in the Karagwe/Buhaya context was called *ihanga*, "the national unit comprising all inhabitants" of the respective kingdoms under the centralised leadership of the *Omukama*, the king (cf. Korit-Schoner and Hartnoll 1942:6 and Cory and Hartnoll 1945:262). As pointed out by Kopytoff, the implicit meaning of the word 'tribe'

> [...] has presupposed a particular historical process: an ethnic germ, its beginnings lost in the mist of the past, growing through time, retaining its essential character, and becoming a people that, in turn, becomes or deserves to become a nation (Kopytoff 1989:4).

In the course of the present book it will be shown that there is none of this kind of "ethnic germ" in the process of the formation of Karagwe and the interlacustrine states. The *ihanga* of Karagwe was comprised of a number of clans, now called *enganda* (sing. *ruganda*), which had settled in the land at different times. They were distinguished according to their time of arrival, the firstcomers being known as "those who were found in the land" *abashangwa butaka*.[29] For political and economic purposes the clans of Karagwe had been centralised under the king to form a polity or *ihanga*. This polity had not arisen from some kind of "ethnic germ" but came to be organised out of the succeeding waves

of individual clans, each one with its own history (Osogo 1970:31), although, as we shall see, it is possible to discern common traits that are shared by the various clan groups under study. Possible common traits can be established by historical linguistic research methods, because clan migrations and linguistic group movements are interrelated.

To lay the ground for a historical study of interlacustrine kingship it is necessary to carry out a religio-ecological, comparative study of the clans that make up those kingdoms. Following the guideline of Beidelman (1970:77), it is not until we understand the basic principles of the social and religious systems of the interlacustrine peoples that we can venture into any historical discussion of the origins of kingship traditions and symbolism. Before proceeding to that discussion the state of research has to be explored.

Endnotes

1 Those two descendant language communities are the West Nyanza and the Western Lakes (Schoenbrun 1990:134 and 1998:167), as will be clarified in Chapter four.

2 For reasons of simplicity I will use the conventional names known from colonial times, some of which later were renamed by dictators now deposed. Indigenous names of Lake Victoria are Luganda: *Nalubaale,* 'mother of all spirits', and Luhaya: *Lweru,* 'the glittering'. *Mwitanzige,* 'the locust killer', is a generic name for all great lakes (Geraud 1972:25). It has been applied to Lake Albert by for example Ehret (1998:3).

3 Such a broad approach is applied in Webster (1979), who edited the volume *Chronology, Migration and Drought in Interlacustrine Africa.*

4 A new district administration map was drawn in 1986 by the NRM (National Resistance Movement) government. See *Social Studies Atlas for Uganda,* Ministry of Education, Kampala, 1988:3, Macmillan Publishers. Since then another 17 districts have been formed (Rwabwogo 1992/1994 and *Uganda Districts Information Handbook,* Expanded Edition 2005-2006). I apologise for not having updated the Administrative Map.

5 The earthquake that struck Tooro in Kabarole district 6/2 1994, measured 6.2 on the Richter scale and was followed by a series of minor quakes during several months.

6 For information on the multiethnic societies of the Bazinza, see Cory Unpublished papers No. 14, Africana Section, University Library, Dar-es-Salaam: R.W. Smith, "Biharamulo (District), Native authority system in Biharamulo, Tanganyika".

7 After the Uganda-Tanzania border conflict of 1978-79, which local Tanzanians preferred to call the "Amin war", a war that was fought across Kagera River, the West-Lake Region was renamed after the Kagera.

8 Katoke (1975:2, note 4) refers to the work of Baker (1963:14) concerning the East African environment.

9 *Social Studies Atlas for Uganda,* Ministry of Education, Kampala, 1988:18, and *Atlas Mpya Kwa Shule Za Tanzania,* George Philip and Son Ltd, 1985:18.

10 Here live one hundred persons and above per square kilometre (*Social Studies Atlas for Uganda,* 1988:37 and 43. Cf. also Schoenbrun, 1990:10).

11 Cf. Schmidt 1978:15. According to our experience in Kampala, at the time of the full moon, there would be some rain, even during the dry season.

12 Typescript made available by courtesy of Prof. Katoke: Hartwig, G.W., "The Bakerebe", prepared for the *Journal of World History*, UNESCO, Neuchatel, 1971:1.

13 In his Luganda-English dictionary Snoxall (1967:227) annotates the *mùtuba* (*Ficus natalensis, Hochst*) as a "barkcloth tree or epiphyte to 40 ft., frequently with aerial roots depending from base of major limbs". The *mùtuba* has a second meaning: "rank of chieftainship".

14 For Runyoro and Runyankore Davies (1938/1952:184) has "*mutoma, o-*, tall tree from which a white barkcloth is obtainable, *Antiaris africana*."

15 On page ten (1978) the present author quoted the tradition recorded in Karagwe by Ruth Berger (1966:157-158). Here it is said that *Wamara's* cow *Kitare* could only eat *eshisha*.

16 P.c. from Mary A. McMaster, Uppsala, November 2001.

17 The "l" in Ankole was probably used by the Baganda interpreters, whom the British colonial administration relied on. In Bantu languages the consonants "l" and "r" are mutually exchangable [allophones], but there are preferences in one or the other directions. In the Luganda language "l" is more common.

18 *Omwihaya* means "the area near the lake" (information from Rev. Sylvester Kahakwa, Ihangiro, BFFM: 390, 1992).

19 In the writings of colonial administrators and their contemporary missionaries, and even as late as 1991 (Mafeje, *The Theory and Ethnography of African Social Formations*, CODESRIA) one would find that Karagwe is placed under the heading of Buhaya/Bukoba.

20 According to the 2002 Population Census, the figure for Karagwe was 425.476, while Bukoba Urban and Rural had 322.399 inhabitants. Including estimated population growth, in 2008, the inhabitants of the Muleba District would amount to 453.931 (see website: www.tanzania.org.tz).

21 For local terminology of those dialect groups see Appendix II.

22 The late Mzee Philemon Kitaburaza was the successor to the last king of Rujumbura, *Kirenzi*, a son of *Kahaya Rutindagyezi*, who in turn is known as the last king of the extensive Mpororo kingdom which split up in about the eighteenth century (Baitwababo 1969:2-3 and Karugire 1971:28-29). The Rujumbura rulers are therefore called *Beenekirenzi*, the sons of *Kirenzi*. Mzee Philemon Kitaburaza explained that there were not many rituals associated with the kingship of Rujumbura because it was not what you would seriously call kingship. It was *obukama bwobunyanjungu*, 'a principality governed by a prince on behalf of the king, his father', here referring to the last king of Mpororo, Kahaya (Mzee Philemon Kitaburaza and Rev. Can. I. Ndihimbirwe, BFFM:669, 1992).

23 The relationship between Bugufi and Burundi was felt to be so strong that in 1948 the king of Burundi, *Mwami* Mwambutsa, wrote a petition to the U.N. to claim "the Bugufi district of the Lake Province of Tanganyika as part of the Kingdom of Urundi" (Cory papers No. 350, Africana Section, University Library of Dar-es-Salaam). The people of Bugufi, the Bahangaza, refused on the grounds that they did not want to exchange the colonial rule of the British for the Belgians (*Omukama* Kasusura, BFFM:414, 1991). We also note that the language community of the Bahangaza of Bugufi is a sub-group under the West Highlands Bantu, so they share language with the Barundi.

24 Katoke believed that only 20 % of the Karagwe population could be estimated as "indigenous" (BFFN/4:6, 1991).

25 It seems more logical that the Banyankore and the Banyambo would be closer in language, because both these groups prefer to use the consonant "r" instead of the "l" as in the *Lu*-haya speech. It appears that Runyankore and Runyambo share some basic vocabulary. For example, when living in Karagwe, I noticed that people would use two different words for 'speak': *kufumora*

and *kuganyira*. In Kampala, my then housekeeper, who was half Munyankore and half Muganda, told me that *kufumola* is Luhaya, while the *Banyankore* would say *kuganyira*. It seems that the verb *kufumora* came into the Runyambo of Karagwe with the Bahaya administrators and immigrants, who would pronounce it with an "l". The Baganda are still more consistent than the Bahaya in their preference for "l" instead of "r", consonants that are mutually exchangeable in Bantu speech.

26 In an unpublished paper entitled "Feudalism in East Africa" the historian at the University of Dar-es-Salaam Buluda Itandala (1983:17) elaborates on the relations of production and the way the land-owning class exploited the peasantry, in Buganda called *bakopi*. He quotes L.P. Mair on this matter (*African Societies*, CUP, Cambridge, 1974:183-185). The private land here referred to is the so-called *mailo* land, institutionalised by the British through the 1900 Buganda Agreement (information from G.T. Mishambi, BFFN/8:25-61, 1993). The ownership of *mailo* land in the hands of royalty and traditional administrators, *bakungu*, has generated social controversies and misunderstandings. For the purpose of protecting the interests of the poor peasants, who occupy land as tenants, the Ugandan Government is now proposing a Land Amendment Bill (see for example The New Vision article of the 17/4 2008: http://www.newvision.co.ug/detail.php?mainNewsCategoryId=8&newsCategoryId=13&newsId=622724, "Peasants cannot afford land rent, says Museveni").

27 Although African politicians will still talk of "tribes", lacking another word, in current East African discourse the term *nationality* is being used more often. See for example the Kenyan writer Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira's book *The Oral Artist* (1983/1992:3) and the work launched by the Faculty of Arts, Makerere University, *Uganda, a Century of Existence*, eds. Okoth, Muranga and Okello Ogwang, 1995.

28 Davis' (1938/1952:49) Lunyoro-Lunyankole-English dictionary has *ihanga*, 'nation', 'distant country'. According to pronunciation the correct prefix to denote the language of the Banyoro as well as the Banyankore should be Ru-, not Lu-.

29 In Bunyoro they say *abasangwa* (see Beattie 1957b:320, cf. J. Kibira 1974:22).

3
Bacwezi

A historical interpretation of interlacustrine kingship traditions and symbolism is closely related to the problem of the *Bacwezi*, linked both to history and religion. In the words of David Cohen (1968:651):

> In the broad scope of the traditional history of the Interlacustrine region of East Africa, perhaps no problem is more complex, nor more interesting, than that of the Cwezi (or Chwezi), the powerful figures with one foot among the gods and one foot among the world of man.

The *Bacwezi* "Among the World of Man"

Early travellers visiting the kings of the interlacustrine region noted for posterity their first-hand impressions of its peoples and their culture. Grant (1864:145), reporting from Karagwe, wrote that he and his companion Captain Speke "could not trace any distinct form of religion amongst this interesting race [...]". At the residence of a *Mkungu* or district officer Rumanyika, Speke (1863/1906:267) made the following observation about his encounter with a bewildering host of creatures, who seemed to represent a superstitious function of "the natives" that was beyond his comprehension:

> Many mendicant women, called by some Wichwézi, by others Mabandwa, all wearing the most fantastic dresses of mbugu[1] covered with beads, shells and sticks, danced before us, singing a comic song, the chorus of which was a long shrill rolling Coo-roo-coo-roo, coo-roo-coo-roo, delivered as they came to a standstill. Their true functions were just as obscure as the religion of the negroes generally; some called them devil-drivers, others evil-eye averters; but, whatever it was for, they imposed a tax on the people, whose minds being governed by a necessity for making some self-sacrifice to propitiate something, they could not tell what, for their welfare in the world, they always gave them a trifle in the same way as the East Indians do their fakirs.

Subsequently, Grant (1864:XV) explained the term *Bandwa* or *Wichwezee* as "a class of gentle beggars", by the latter seen in Bunyoro,

who once were said to have occupied the whole country and then, suddenly had disappeared underground (Grant 1864:266-267).

Some sixty years later, when East Africa had been opened up for the colonial and missionary enterprise (cf. Gray 1953:150), the seeds to the Hamitic hypothesis, first sown by Speke (Farelius 1993), had taken root and grown into a self-evident fact. Most missionaries and colonial administrators working among Bantu-speaking peoples in East and Central Africa during the first half of the 20th century ascribed the origin of the kingdoms to Hamitic influence from the north-east.[2] The Missionary from The White Fathers, Père Julien Gorju, wrote his often quoted "Ethnographie de la Partie Anglaise du Vicariat de l'Uganda" entitled *Entre le Victoria l'Albert et l'Edouard* (1920). Here he expressed the current view on the *Bacwezi*: "... our Bahima are Hamites and they say that the Bacwezi are also Hamites". To Gorju the *Bacwezi* should be seen as a strictly "ethnographic" term. "Deified" by the *Bahima* they reflected a genuine commonly remembered history for the inhabitants of the interlacustrine high tableland. On the other hand, the cult societies of the *Waswezi* of Usumbwa-Unyamwezi and the widespread *Wawandwa* cult are in Gorju's opinion associated with "witchcraft" and should not at all be equated with the *Bacwezi* heroes. Gorju argued that to the *Muhima* it would be unthinkable and regarded as a betrayal of his ancestors to accept the *Bacwezi* as non-*Bahima*, because there was nothing in common between him and the *bayiru* who surrounded him, and the *Mucwezi* was his brother (Gorju 1920:50-51).

Elaborating on the culture and history of the Banyankore, Lukyn Williams (1938:34) revealed his conviction that "the evidence points to the Bacwezi being Hamitic cattle owners, of the same stock as the Bahima, and who composed one of the earlier Hamitic invasions from the North-East into the Lake regions". Following on the same line, Ingham (1957) was explicit on the assumed implications of Hamitic influence in this part of Africa. He regarded the *Bacwezi* as a group of people with a high standard of civilisation no different from other Hamitic invaders. As such he thought they had been able to "bring with them the fruits of contact with Europeans further north in

Ethiopia" (Ingham 1957:132). Also writing on the Banyankore, Oberg (1940/1970:125) concluded that the *Bacwezi* legends are "the Muhima's version of his cultural history, particularly as it is related to the origin of his political institutions". Therefore, to Oberg and his contemporaries, it was regarded unthinkable and beyond comprehension that the indigenous peoples in the Great Lakes region could have engineered their own political institutions. The concept of "the divine kingship" needs to be considered in the light of this racist ideological framework.

In a paper entitled "Concepts of Race in the Historiography of North-East Africa" (1966), Wyatt MacGaffey stressed the correlation between race and ability to rule, which he thought derived from theoretical constructions developed during the last two decades of the Nineteenth Century (cf. Lepsius 1880). These theories formed the European ideological superstructure for industrial nationalism at home and the building of empires abroad. "Both called for an ideology, which sanctioned as natural and necessary a polarization of the rulers and the ruled, the bearers and receivers of culture" (1966:2). MacGaffey referred to other works of German scholars. The ethnologist C.G. Seligman developed the thesis in his book *The Races of Africa* (1930). Carl Meinhof's *Die Sprachen der Hamiten* (1912) gave linguistic substantiation to the claim of a superior Hamitic culture bearer in Africa. They applied the idealistic model for Africa in a simplified and rigid form, drawing the picture of absolute values of the Caucasoid and the Negroid types. Belonging to a Caucasoid (European) superior race, as a light-skinned pastoralist, the Hamite was believed to be "better armed and quicker witted" than the dark agricultural Negro (Seligman 1930:158). In a recent book, *The Great Lakes of Africa, Two Thousand Years of History*, Jean-Pierre Chrétien (2003) maintains that the genocide in Rwanda and the massacres in Congo-Kinshasha are consequences of this racist ideology, brought by European colonialists.

According to the idealistic construction of Hamitic superiority, the emergence of African kingship could not be attributable to any other people than the assumed bearers of such Caucasoid genetic elements. So the Hamites were made responsible for the idea of government that

appeared in Africa: "the divine kingship" (MacGaffey 1966:7). Sir James G. Frazer, in his famous work *The Golden Bough* (1890), had launched the concept of "the divine kingship" within the then current theoretical climate of evolutionism (cf. Olof Sundquist 2002:18-21).

Encouraged by his mentor and friend Sir J.G. Frazer, Rev. John Roscoe (1923a:V, Ray 1991:22-53) had done extensive ethnological research among "the African tribes" in the Great Lakes region. Roscoe had not been sure about the historical Hamitic identity of the *Bacwezi*, although one reviewer wrote that his "deus ex machina to explain all the cultural origins in the lake area was 'the Hamitic invasions'"(Wright 1952:84). Within the context of Bunyoro, Roscoe described the *Bacwezi* as:

> ... a misty and somewhat bewildering collection of beings [...] who, though regarded as immortal and almost divine, were completely subordinate to Ruhanga, whose immediate descendants they were. After living as men in the country for many years, these Bacwezi suddenly departed, leaving behind them their priests, who could communicate with them and obtain blessings and favours for them. It was to these Bacwezi that the people generally turned for help and not to Ruhanga, who was regarded as having retired from active participation in the affairs of the world which he created (Roscoe 1923a:21-22).

When dealing with the "early kings of Kitara", Roscoe wrote: "[...] no one can tell whether they really represent royal families of Hamitic stock [...] or whether they are purely mythical personages". According to his sources, some people had said that the *Bacwezi* "divine beings" had once formed a ruling dynasty before they departed (1923a:87). But the stories told of them were thought rather to belong to legend than history, so they were treated in his final chapter on "Tradition and Folklore". *Isimbwa*, whom Kinyoro sources present as "the father of Ndahura", is mentioned as "[...], a man of the priestly clan of Bachwezi" (Roscoe 1923a:88).

Father Crazzolara (1937), on the other hand, having served for some thirty years in northern Uganda, felt more confident about the historical background of the *Bacwezi*. Comparing Luo and Kinyoro clan

names from a Luo perspective, he pronounced that the *Bacwezi* were identical with the commonly accepted (Wright 1952:85, Buchanan 1974:183) Nilotic clan of *Cwa*:

> The invasion of Bunyoro has always been supposed to have come from the north, from north east, possibly from Abyssinia or Somalia; one speaks of "Hamites." The term *Bacwezi* has been thought to be connected with "*Shoa*" in Abyssinia. This theory is looked upon more favourably even in high circles in Bunyoro: it looks almost as if they were ashamed of their ancestors, of those who procured them the throne. No, "*Bacwezi*" comes from "*Cwää*", of whom there are plenty in Bunyoro, all over the country; there is a Cwää district in Kitgum (Crazzolara 1937:15).

A.C.A. Wright (1952:85), a colonial civil servant with an interest in history and traditional religion, denounced the proposed Luo identity of the *Bacwezi*.[3] He did so with reference to John Nyakatura's "excellent and well-balanced history, *Abakama ba Bunyoro-Kitara*". Later fieldwork in southern Bunyoro, conducted at the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Makerere University, confirmed this view:

> ... Nyakatura together with other old people whom I interviewed strictly deny that the Bacwezi were Lwoo people. For unlike the Lwoo people such as especially the Alurs, Acholis and the Langi, who are generally dark and even at times black and are the neighbours of the Banyoro, the Bacwezi are said to be white skinned people by almost all writers about Bunyoro Kitara–Crazzolara included (Balyebuga 1974:9).[4]

Wright (1949:116), on his part, adhered to the then current view that the *Bacwezi* were *Bahima* and they were "certainly of Kushitic, i.e. Meroitic origin". A local Kinyoro translation was then offered by A.R. Dunbar (1965:17), who wrote that the name *Abacwezi* could be translated as 'the people of the moon'–*aba-cwe-zi* meaning 'those who came from the moon'.

The association with the moon in *Bacwezi* traditions was one of the reasons why the historian Christopher Wrigley refuted their historicity. He believed "that in recent years the study of Uganda's prehistory has been tending to follow a false trail, in that far more has been demanded of tribal tradition than it is actually able to perform" (Wrigley 1958:11).

Reflecting on the name *Kwezi*, 'Moon' that was recorded for *Isaza*'s Prime Minister, who had made bloodbrotherhood with *Nyamiyonga* of the Underworld, Wrigley wrote:

> Kwezi means 'moon' and there can hardly be much doubt about the identity of Isaza, who was detained below the earth while his deputy the moon rose into the sky. What we have here, evidently, is not a romantic presentation of a historical episode but an elemental myth, a splendid piece of fantasy woven round the setting of the sun. ... when Isaza is recognized as the sun it at once acquires poetic meaning: the lowing of the cattle towards milking-time is conceived as causing the sun to turn down towards the horizon (Wrigley 1958:11-12).

Wrigley then ascribed the perception of the *Bacwezi* as "ancient rulers of a great Hima empire" and their subsequent "deification" by their Bantu subjects to the popularity of the Hamitic hypothesis. The *Bacwezi*, fitting nicely to the requirements of "superior" immigrant people, would never have been understood as historical kings in the records of "Nyoro and Nkore traditions if it had not been for this *idée fixe,* which has bedevilled the study of the subject" (Wrigley 1958:12). So Wrigley saw Wright (1949:116) Oliver (1953:135), K.W. (1936:149),[5] Nyakatura (1947) and Katate and Kamugungunu (1955) as followers of the Greek theorist Euhemerus, who turned kings into gods. He believed that the true meaning of the *Bacwezi* was purely mythical and this was shown in the earlier collection by Mrs Ruth Fisher (1911/1970), which had accordingly portrayed the theme of the moon, the reigns of the gods (*Abatembuzi*) and the demi-gods (*Abacwezi*). Later versions recorded by the aforementioned African scholars had stripped the story of its mythical content, thus converting myth into history. This they did because of their level of Christian and European education, in which there was no place for gods. Therefore, in Wrigley's view, Mr Nyakatura should be regarded more as a disciple of the historian Sir John Gray than "an authentic voice of the tribal ancestors" (Wrigley 1958:13).

At a later date, when the Hamitic theory and its inherent racial connotations had been rejected (Sanders 1969), Crazzolara (1969) developed his alternative theory in the article entitled "The Hamites–

who were they?" The answer to this question lay with Paranilotic peoples (Oliver 1977:628-629) of Southern and Highlands extraction. Consequently, Father Crazzolara's theory was termed *the Nilotic hypothesis* in later research (e.g. Tantala 1989:14).

Fresh projects to inquire into the rich multi-level potential of African traditions that Wrigley did not believe in began under the auspices of the History of Uganda Project based at Makerere University (1969-1972). Research teams working among Bantu as well as Luo-speakers collected oral traditions that were published in East Africa.[6] Another group of scholars associated with the University of Dar-es-Salaam under the editorship of Prof. Katoke prepared monographs for seven ancient states in northwestern Tanzania. Likewise based on oral traditional sources, the project was executed under contract with UNESCO as part of the programme of African studies (Katoke 1971).[7] F.J. Kaijage's (1971:552) work on Kyamutwara contains valuable information about the *Bahinda* dynasty gaining power through their alleged mighty *Bacwezi* ancestors. The overall results of these efforts were subsequently developed for the volume *Chronology, Migration and Drought in Interlacustrine Africa* (Webster ed. 1979). In line with the general perspective of this work, the *Bacwezi* are treated as a human dynasty, reflecting a distinct period in the history of the region, presupposing that oral tradition can be both historically true and symbolically significant (Buchanan 1979:89).

Then Samwiri R. Karugire (1971:120-122) also, from his Kinyankore context, held that the *Bacwezi* seem to have been real historical figures. That opinion was based on archaeological findings as well as his observation of the common names and similarities in traditions and deification in such disparate areas as Buganda and Bunyoro (cf. Kiwanuka 1971:9). *Bukulu* in Buganda and *Bukuku* in Bunyoro may have shared ancestry to the *Bacwezi*, who may have ruled this region as one entity. Thus Karugire proposed on internal grounds a possible *Bacwezi* kingdom before the subsequent dynasties of Buganda, Bunyoro and Nkore assumed power (Karugire 1971:120-121). Considering evidence from the field as well as secondary sources

Oliver in the *Cambridge History of Africa* (1977:633-634) summarised their view on the problem of an early *Bacwezi* dynastic rule as follows:

> There is no inherent unlikelihood about the emergence of a temporary, tribute-imposing overlordship over a series of small chieftainships in such an ecologically coherent area ...

This formulation is more careful and considerate of internal factors than previous assumptions that the elaborate political organisation of the region must have been brought from outsiders. In 1979 another group of scholars working on the Great Lakes region gathered in Bujumbura. One of their most important objectives was to denounce once and for all the cliché of the culture-bringing pastoral Hamite. Due to their fundamental role in the history of the region, a continued collection of oral traditions in western or southwestern Uganda as well as in northwestern Tanzania on the *Bacwezi* and on *Ruhinda* emerged as an important point in the recommendations of the meeting (Ndoricimpa et al 1981:7-13).

The *Bacwezi* "Among the Gods"

While some scholars were busy safeguarding the *Bacwezi* for the history of the interlacustrine region, others followed a different path and concentrated on their religious roles in the "kubandwa" (Berger 1973) spirit mediumship[8] cults. Already in 1932 the then Government Sociologist in Tanganyika, Hans Cory[9], had joined the above-mentioned *Buswezi* society.[10] He connected the origin of the cult to the *Bacwezi* kings [sic] from Bunyoro, assuming that what was originally a religious cult of ancestor worship performed by a circle of people who claimed to be descendants of the ancient dynasty eventually developed into the secret society called Buswezi" (Cory 1955:923).

Then from the Bunyoro perspective, the social anthropologist John Beattie (1957c, 1961) studied various aspects of the spirit mediumship cult he had observed in Bunyoro. Government and missionary repression had driven the spirit mediumship cult in Bunyoro underground. In the old days, Beattie was told, *embandwa* groups could frequently be

seen in the villages. These must have been the groups of *Wichwezee* early observers mentioned, although neither of them "seems to have understood that the central concern of the 'Bandwa' or 'Wichwezi sorceresses' was with spirit possession" (Beattie 1961:20).[11]

Still, the following statement by Ernst Johanssen, the German missionary to Bukoba and Rwanda, reveals that there were early observers who understood the nature of the spiritual experience in Uganda, his racist bias notwithstanding:

> ... the *mandwa* in Uganda played an important part as medium, and we understand immediately that we here in the African interior find a conception of prophecy, inspiration, speaking in tongues and its interpretation, the existence of which one could hardly expect among the primitive Negro tribes. But also the African of the interior longs for flashes into the future and revelations of the secrets. He is convinced that his yearnings are subordinated to the work of the divine spirit on his spirit. He can only remain a recipient of the former. God must choose his prophets himself and His revelation surpasses human understanding ... (Johanssen 1925:9).

Beattie investigated the social framework of religion in Bunyoro. The communal cult of the *Cwezi* spirits, basically comprising nineteen benevolent "white or pure" spirits, *mbandwa ezera,* may be said to have constituted the traditional religion in Bunyoro.[12] They are perceived as:

> contemporary effective spirits, each terminologically identified with one of the long-dead if not mythical *Cwezi*, and each possessing its own individuality and special competence (Beattie 1961:12).

These spirits are concerned with fertility and the purpose of the "white" *mbandwa* or *cwezi* cult is to convey blessing and prosperity to groups, groups that comprise smaller units of clans and subclans. Each clan has a "loose association" (Beattie 1961:14) with one or two *cwezi* spirits and it is only with those particular spirits that clan members can enter into a special relationship within the context of a small agnatically-based local group consisting of the extended family or household, *eka*. One medium, *nyakatagara*[13], for each *eka* received the calling from the *cwezi* or "white" *mbandwa* spirit and the selection

of that particular medium was revealed e.g. by sickness on the part of the medium elect or revelations in dreams experienced by the *nyin'eka*, 'head of the household'.

According to Beattie, the Banyoro in general did not regard the *Bacwezi* as ancestors, *bazimu*, in his terminology called "ghosts", because they had been rulers and as such they could only be ancestors of the *Babiito* dynasty. This author did not take any stand concerning the validity of the *Babiito* claim to genealogical ties to the "semi-mythical" *Bacwezi* but was content to say that it must have greatly enhanced *Bito* prestige and authority (Beattie 1961:12). Neither did he speculate on their origin or identity, as "indeed it has been questioned whether they really existed at all" (Beattie 1971:49-50).[14]

Luc de Heusch, in his far-reaching work *Le Rwanda et la civilisation interlacustre* (1966), took another approach. A Professor at the Institute of Sociology, Université Libre in Brussels, de Heusch attempted to combine history and anthropology using structural analysis. He had a twofold aim: on the one hand to demystify history, on the other, to reclaim for myth its historical dimension. The subtitle of his book reflects this ambition: *Étude d'anthropologie historique et structural.* He explored the spirit mediumship cult as it developed out of the collapse of the *Bacwezi* dynasty. In line with Oliver he accepted their historicity. He identified two key "figures" that had central roles in the myths/cults of interlacustrine *kubandwa*: *Wamara* in the north and *Ryangombe* in the south. de Heusch believes these two streams of tradition structured around a similar event–"the dissolution of an empire and the defeat of a cultural hero" (Cohen 1968:653). In the case of *Wamara* the myth symbolically describes the catastrophe that befell the *Bacwezi* dynasty and their kingdom, while for *Ryangombe* the myth reflects a later development in Rwanda. That was when king *Bwimba* in the early seventeenth century succumbed and gave up his kingdom to the *Muhinda* king from Karagwe, *Ruganzu Ndoori*, who established a new dynasty. The *Bahinda* conquerors developed and spread the *Wamara* myth and cult to legitimise their political roles as heirs to the *Bacwezi*;

in the case of *Ryangombe / Bwimba* the myths and cults became a means of opposition to oppose the new dynasty in Rwanda.

The *Ryangombe kubandwa* cult, structurally related to the *Bacwezi*, here offers the believers salvation not only from the tyrannical powers of the ancestors and their basically hostile attitudes towards their surviving offspring but also from the rigidity of Rwandan society. *Ryangombe* is believed to have established a happy and eternal kingdom on top of a volcano somewhere between heaven and earth. Open to *Tutsi*, *Hutu* and *Twa* on equal basis, the adherents of the cult enter into a personal relationship on spirit mediumship basis with *Ryangombe* through several stages of initiation. Incorporated into a new liberated fellowship, the initiate has access after death to the mythical kingdom.

Carole Buchanan (1969)[15] saw the work by de Heusch as one of the contributions that had made historians begin "to give more attention to the problem of demythologizing African history and restructuring myth in its historical dimension". In her paper on the *Bacwezi* she drew the conclusion from correlating court traditions with clan histories that the *Bacwezi* cult that spread throughout the interlacustrine region was a feature of early *Babiito* policy contributing to their successful assertion of power. This cult thus constitutes the religious legacy of the *Bacwezi*. Quoting Oliver (1953:135 and 1955:116), Buchanan (1969:5) then describes the political legacy of the *Bacwezi*, which:

> included 'a system of administrative officialdom accustomed to ruling small districts as the local representatives of a centralized monarchy'. In addition, the regalia of kingship–royal drums, beaded crowns surmounted by tail copper cones, copper spears for ritual use, reed fences surrounding the king's residence–are attributed to them.

Therefore, accepting their historicity from the context of clans as well as written dynastic histories recorded in Bunyoro in correlation with the findings of Roland Oliver, Buchanan recognised the twofold legacy of the *Bacwezi* to the interlacustrine region, namely the symbols of kingship and the *Bacwezi* cult.

Iris Berger, on the other hand, followed the path of sceptics opened up by Wrigley. Berger's dissertation is a historical study entitled *The*

'*kubandwa*' *religious complex of interlacustrine East Africa* (1973). She attempted to explain the role of spirit mediumship within the total social, economic and political organisation among peoples living in an area covering most societies of western Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and northwestern Tanzania. Berger based her analysis on written sources, mainly missionary, complemented with fieldwork among Bakiga elders. Her inventory of vocabularies, rituals, myths, spirits and symbols related to "kubandwa" served to investigate patterns of interaction, continuity and change of this movement. The changes observed were, as far as the source material could allow, explained within the context of the broader socio-political and historical situation. Comparing the "*Nkore*" with the "Nyoro" *Bacwezi* texts, she concludes that the *"Nyoro"* may be accepted as the original "since it has a higher degree of esthetic and structural continuity all geared to explaining the fate of the *Cwezi"* (Berger 1973:34).

Berger's investigation shows that the initiation rites and underlying themes connected to the "kubandwa" cult followed a remarkably consistent pattern (Berger 1973:68-69). "Kubandwa's" extraordinary appeal over such a wide geographical area was its openness, welcoming individuals of any status to a new mystical life, separate from and superior to that of the profane. In this realm they could achieve high-ranking positions unattainable in ordinary society (Berger 1973:81).

In ensuing publications Berger (1980, 1981) developed her more provocative conclusions regarding the problem of the *Bacwezi*. Quoting Nyakatura (1973:44), she referred to the interlacustrine peoples' perception of the first Europeans to arrive on the Lake Victoria shore. The *Bacwezi* had previously disappeared from *Kitara* and the people were uncertain as to what had befallen them. So when they saw the white people coming, they believed these were the *Bacwezi* who had come back to reclaim their lost throne. It was believed strongly by some people that the Europeans were the "red sons of Mugasha", who emerged from Sese Islands and that they were white-skinned because they had been living underwater like fish (Nyakatura 1973:44). Berger brought up such popular beliefs that identified the first white people with the *Bacwezi*. She wrote that:

> Wrigley may be correct in denying the existence of a historical human dynasty called Abacwezi, since their reputation as historical figures developed as a result of European misinterpretations of African statements that happened to reinforce erroneous colonial theories of the African past. The European misconception arose from African characterisations of the first whites to arrive in Uganda in the nineteenth century as 'Abacwezi'. While the Europeans involved understandably misinterpreted these attributions as evidence that the Abacwezi had been an ancient dynasty of light-skinned kings, the Africans undoubtedly were referring to the association of the colour white with the world of spirits (Berger 1980:66).[16]

According to Berger's analysis the deep-black *Wichwezee* mendicant "gypsies", whom the first explorers had reported as a possible remainder of an earlier population,[17] represented a more authentic picture of the *Bacwezi* than the view of them as the white-skinned invaders that she thought had emerged in the 20th century. The latter view is in Berger's opinion a product of colonial historiography, initially coined by the racist descriptions of African societies of Sir Harry Johnston (1902). It was not until the colonial setting reshaped the content and fostered the transmission of the traditions in written as well as oral form that these traditions became streamlined and depicted the *Bacwezi* as a white-skinned dynasty (Berger 1980:66-67, cf. Berger 1981:52). She believed that although one could not be sure that the impressions given by the early travellers reflected the true situation either, at least their accounts were "less subject than later ones to a systematically elaborated denigration of African societies" (Berger 1980:69).

Thus freed from the assumptions of an *Abacwezi* dynasty, Berger felt the new ruling groups (the *Babiito* and the *Bahinda*) "depended heavily for their legitimacy and for their sense of historical continuity on the religious powers of earlier inhabitants" (Berger 1981:46).

The position that the *Bacwezi* were only to be found in "the world of gods" gained support from evidence collected in Buhaya, where the *Bacwezi* were "not known to have been living" (Korit-Schoener 1942:13). Basing his argument on the "oral and religious" history of the people of Kiziba kingdom, Lutatenekwa (1972) tries to show that the so-called *Bacwezi* never lived as actual people. In the *"Haya-*

Nyambo-Ziba" languages the word *Bacwezi* means "spirits of the great ancestors long dead", which simply means that they were spirits and does not refer to any specific ancient dynasty claiming to have founded "the empire of Kitara". So Lutatenekwa means that *Bacwezi* cannot be the name of a ruling dynasty, because in Luhaya the word *Bacwezi* means 'spirits' and only that. The founding dynasty of *Kitara* was of the "Hima stock" and was overrun by the *Babiito*, who took over Bunyoro and certain other states, notably Kiziba. The *Bahinda* who established themselves in Nkore, Karagwe, Buhaya (except for Kiziba) and Buzinza are *"Hima* claiming descent from the old rulers of Kitara, whom the *Babiito* ousted".

> This, therefore, makes the pre-Babiito rulers of Kitara also *Hima, and they should be referred to simply as that. They were not 'Bacwezi'*–at least not while they lived and ruled–since the Bacwezi are the *spirits* of long dead kings of Buhaya and adjacent parts, who in a sense live on and with whom one may communicate through the medium of the embandwa (Lutatenekwa 1972:5).

However, there is no scholarly agreement concerning the descent of the *Bahinda* and the so-called *Bacwezi* founders of *Kitara*. Nyakatura (1947/1973:47) articulated the general belief among the Banyoro that the *Bacwezi* and the *Bahima* were different people. Here it is said that the *Bacwezi* did not bring cattle. Cohen (1968:653) wrote that the question of the *Bacwezi/Bahima* identity and their political and cultural contribution to the region is still an open one:

> Was there once a defined 'Hima' ethnic group, which entered the region and introduced, among other things, certain concepts of kingship? Were the Hinda and Cwezi groups both descendent from this Hima parent? These questions thrust at the very point where knowledge of the traditional history of the region is at its weakest.

Peter Schmidt, although sharing Lutatenekwa's literal Kihaya interpretation of the *Bacwezi* as spirits, found no reason to consider the *Bacwezi* to be *Bahima*. Instead he followed the sceptics, exploring new ways to resolve the *Bacwezi* problem from the *Bahaya* context. Schmidt developed his *Historical Archaeology* subtitled *A Structural Approach in*

an African Culture (1978). Applying Malinowsky's (1954) functional approach to myth and legends among the Trobriand islanders Schmidt set out to identify the various "indigenous" categories of oral traditions of the Bahaya. In the course of his research he came to realise, in contrast to his expectations, that mythology and folklore were the categories of oral traditions that complemented archaeology, proving to be far more essential than royal and clan histories.

Schmidt's structural analysis of "mythemes" in Kiziba and Kyamutwara oral traditions shows that the dynasties in both kingdoms acquired legitimacy through royal alliances with local rainmakers, the mediums of *Mugasha*. In Kinyoro oral records the picture of *Mugasha* and his connection to the *Bacwezi* is not as clear as in Buhaya. In Bunyoro, where the name of *Mugasha* is excluded from some of the *Bacwezi* genealogies, the *Bacwezi* are sometimes recorded as "a race of white people" (Nyakatura 1973:18-22), sometimes as "gods" (Fisher 1911/1970:99). Generalising from the context of the Bahaya, Schmidt theorises that the *Bacwezi* mythology in Bunyoro as well as in Buhaya may be about different religious cults more than about political entities:

> The Bahaya versions emphasize that the Bacwezi were a religious phenomenon rather than an identifiable political dynasty. The ambiguity in the Bunyoro versions of Bacwezi origins is perhaps a result of a similar emphasis which heretofore has been misinterpreted by historians using the mythology to construct political dynastic histories (Schmidt 1978:62-63).

The outcome of Schmidt's structural analysis of the *Bacwezi* mythology among the Bahaya demonstrates how the *embandwa* spirit mediums of the *Bacwezi* exercised political opposition to the ruling dynasties that stood in special cultic relationships with *Mugasha*. He argued that the *Bacwezi* in the context of the Bahaya were associated with the earliest iron-working clans and their shrines. Relevant iron-working archaeological sites that Schmidt linked to the *Bacwezi* spirits were dated to about 500 BC.

The findings of Mugyabuso Mulokozi (1987) disagree with Schmidt's early date for the *Bacwezi*. He studied the orally performed

heroic narrative poems, the *nanga* epics of the Bahaya. The *nanga*[18] genre is an important interlacustrine medium for transferring historical information, whereby the bard interprets and recreates history in close interaction with the audience. Mulokozi integrates the historical message of the *nanga* epics recorded in Buhaya into the larger interlacustrine context. From his Kiziba perspective he sees the *Bacwezi* as "a pastoral lineage belonging to the *Baranzi* clan of Bunyoro", who around AD 1300 assumed power in *Kitara*, centered in Bunyoro, but including parts of present day Buganda, Busoga, Toro, Mpororo and Buhaya (Mulokozi 1987:30). In this regional scenario the pre-*Bahinda* rulers in Karagwe and Buhaya are regarded as governors despatched by the *Bacwezi* rulers of *Kitara*. The centralisation of "the Kitara Empire", however, "inevitably aroused opposition from the subject peoples".

> In Buhaya, the indigenous opposition to the Bachwezi rule appears to have centered around the indigenous cults, especially the cult of Mugasha (Batundu clan). The Bachwezi, in turn, instituted the cult of Wamala, a former king and culture hero, against the Mugasha cult (Mulokozi 1987:31).

The *nanga* epic of *Mugasha* relates how this "indigenous" culture hero engages in the struggle against the *Bacwezi*. However, the causes of his victory are not ascribed to his "transformation into a god" as Schmidt (1978:101) argues, but to the way *Mugasha* projects existential needs of a people depending on the lake for their subsistence. *Mugasha* is a fisherman, who controls his natural environment as well as enjoying support from fellow fishermen's clans. In the words of Mulokozi (1987:141):

> Mugasha, then, is an attempt to recreate, retrospectively, the human life of the prototype of the Mugasha who now exists in the form of a deity. It is part of the process of mythologizing, rationalising and social sanctioning.

So *Mugasha* becomes meaningful to the interlacustrine peoples not in the first place because he is "transformed into a god" but because he is believed to have been a human being before he became a "deity", to whom "many people turn whenever they need divine assistance". *Mugasha* is, after *Wamara*, "the most powerful deity in the Bahaya

pantheon, excepting the supreme deity, *Nyamuhanga*". Therefore Mulokozi finds it logical to argue, as Schmidt had done, that the "deity" *Mugasha* "was utilised by the *Bahima* and *Babiito* conquerors in Buhaya in their struggle to maintain their power against the politico-religious opposition of the indigenous clans and their cults" (Mulokozi 1987:141).

We have seen how scholars embracing the sceptical view that denounced the traditional claims of an ancient *Bacwezi* dynasty did so partly by referring to alleged misinterpretations by historians (Schmidt 1978:62-63, cf. Wrigley 1958, Berger 1980, 1981). Reacting against this view, the historian Renee Tantala (1989:25-26) states that generally:

> those who have doubted the historicity of the Cwezi have tended to overstate what might be called the 'colonial hypothesis'. They have argued that traditions about the remote past have been shaped substantially by European notions about the Cwezi and by the colonial setting in which the traditions were recorded.

Tantala finds it "hard to accept that the people of Kitara had to wait for Europeans to come along and tell them that the *Cwezi* had been kings in the remote past". To her the "colonial hypothesis" meant a more or less pronounced disregard of "the complexities of precolonial ideology" (1989:26). So she set out to collect and evaluate every available published source on the topic. Carole Buchanan allowed Tantala access to her field-notes. The resulting dissertation entitled *The Early History of Kitara in Western Uganda: Process Models of Religious and Political Change* (1989) provides an interesting exposition of a vast amount of source-material. Theories of transition and change in the works of historians, anthropologists and folklorists inform her theoretical perspective.[19] The assumption that "a socio-cultural formation is constructed through the daily life of a community" (Tantala 1989:31) underlay the project. She worked from the premise that cultural models are ideological constructions. The "Kitara epic" is such a cultural model. To Tantala the *Bacwezi* dynasty depicted in the "Kitara epic" was an ideological construction of the *Babiito* and as such it was an effective charter because the people really believed

that the "Cwezi personae" had been the pre-*Biito* rulers of *Kitara*. She (1989:27) did not deny the historicity of the *Bacwezi* as once living human beings, but saw them as powerful spirit mediums of deceased local leaders, who in possession became *"Cwezi personae"*. The weight of the evidence could not be denied: the *Bacwezi* had existed. This is Tantala's "hypothesis of conflation" which suggests

> that the activities of the Cwezi personae reflect the activities of prominent Cwezi mediums, mediums who so personified their supernatural patrons that mediums and spirits become practically inseparable in oral traditions (Tantala 1989:30).

Tantala proposes that the *"Cwezi personae* probably represent distinct nodes of pre-Biito authority rather than a single pre-Biito dynasty" (Tantala 1989:20), stating that the region's pastoral people, the *Bahuma/ Bahima*, remain an enigma (Tantala 1989:111). Instead of attempting to fit them into the early history of the region she developed a hypothesis ascribing the observable impact of cattle keeping in Kinyoro oral records to "ideological change rather than the arrival of large numbers of Huma pastoralists" (Tantala 1989:113).[20] The shift towards pastoralist values during the *Tembuzi* to *Cwezi* transition period from at least 1000 AD would be a major ideological change suggested by the *Isaza* cycle of "the Kitara epic". Circumstantial evidence indicating local events and cultural practices, traces of which have endured through time, contribute to Tantala's assessment that *Isaza*'s "node of authority" is primarily of ritual, rather than political nature. She highlights another interpretation of the term *Bacwezi* stressing their role as mediums of spiritual blessing transferred by spitting; the noun *mucwezi* could be derived from the verb *kucwera*, 'to spit' (Tantala 1989:290).

Stressing locally discernible events in the scenario of the *Bacwezi* personae, Tantala does not connect them to the sites of *Bigo* and *Ntusi*. Nevertheless the dates she allows for their emergence in history coincide with new estimates of the latter. Recent archaeological research has pushed back the occupation dates for *Ntusi* to a period from as early as 900 or 1000 AD (Sutton 1998:49). Schoenbrun (1998:125) followed up Tantala's model when explaining how societies dealt with

social tensions that arose in the Great Lakes region between herders and farmers over healing practices and access to property during a period between 900 and 1500. This was a time of territorial expansion and environmental shifts, when innovative spirit mediums established the *kubandwa* institution as they:

> [...] converted the deceased leaders of local ruling lines into figures of creative power. Through the healing work of the mediums, these ancestors could help communities meet the challenges to social well-being caused by inequalities in the concentrations of instrumental power over cattle and by rulers' attempts to separate women (in their status as wives) from cattle. Two famous transformations of spirits' territory took place. One occurred in the northern sphere of the savannah around the figures of the Cwezi and the other occurred in the southern sphere of the savannah around the figure of Ryángombe (Schoenbrun 1998:125).

While accepting Tantala's interpretation of the *Bacwezi* as spirit mediums and priests emerging during the afore-mentioned period, Schoenbrun (1993a:3) was not convinced that Schmidt was right, when he connected the *Bacwezi* with early Iron Age sites from 500 BC. This was because he thought that "the links" Schmidt had found "in royal traditions between iron smelting sites, ruling dynasties and the powerful *Abacwezi* patron spirits" were no proof of any actual coincidence in the early Iron Age. Those links could just as well have stemmed from "later attempts by new dynasties to bolster legitimacy by claiming connections with sacred places" (1993a:3). Schoenbrun perceives the *Bacwezi* as spirit mediums and healers concerned about the social problems of inequality caused by excessive ownership of cattle. He visualises a scenario whereby the healing, "creative" [spiritual] powers of *Bacwezi* mediums balanced the "instrumental" [political] powers of rulers.[21]

Bacwezi: Project in Progress

In early research, the *Bahima* specialised cattle keepers had been identified as being closely related to a *Bacwezi* dynasty. Tantala (1989:111) stated that the region's pastoral people, the *Bahuma*/*Bahima*,

remain an enigma. The historiography of the *Bacwezi* as a human dynasty or not and their possible relationship to specialised herders have followed the general trend of ideas at particular times in history.

In 1862 the explorers Speke and Grant encountered King Rumanyika I in Karagwe. The current racial ideology led them to conclude that the King and his *Bahima* followers could not possibly be African ("Negroes") (Speke 1863/1906:211). Speke and Grant believed they were Caucasoid "Hamites". These were "endowed with the myth of superior achievements and considerable beneficial influence on their Negro brothers" (Sanders 1969:528), notions that were to give ideological support for the colonial enterprise. So it was the enthusiastic reports about the hospitality and friendliness of the Karagwe King that subsequently gave rise to the "Hamitic hypothesis", an improperly dubbed "myth" that would generate a host of misconceptions in the historiography of the region.

The bias of the authors contaminated early reports on the interlacustrine kingdoms. Nevertheless they "remain historical sources in their own right" (Sutton 1993:33). Ensuing missionary reports, in spite of their paternalistic touch, contain valuable ethnographic data. The White Fathers Gorju (1920) and Pagès (1933) did not question the assumption that the *Bahima* and *Batutsi* were Hamites. Their prejudiced minds attributed common traits in the social structure to these newcomers.

Greenberg (1966) debunked the linguistic basis of the "Hamitic Myth" at the same time as Posnansky (1966:6) concluded there was no evidence to prove that the *Bahima* were "Hamitic". In the newly independent states, as a reaction against the Hamitic historiography, there seems to have been a trend to "indigenise" the *Bahima/Batutsi* and make them "Bantu" (Posnansky 1966:6, cf. Cohen 1968:653 and Karugire 1971:47). After all they all spoke the same Bantu language (Posnansky 1966:6). A later overview mainly dealing with African archaeology has remarked that there was at this period in time a general tendency to endorse more or less consciously the unique culture of the Bantu perceived as an ethnically distinct group, or even "superior

armed race" (Sinclair, Shaw and Andah 1993:11). We recognise the rhetoric from earlier historiography, where "the Hamite" was deemed to be "better armed and quicker witted" than his "Negro" brother.

The general assertionist trend of scholarship that followed in the wake of Independence, enhancing internal development of specialised pastoralism, influenced the way scholars regard the *Bacwezi* dynasty. Kingdoms had been abolished in the East African states, perhaps an excuse to relegate powerful ancestors, *abazaire*, 'parents',[22] of the kings to the spiritual realm. Wrigley (1958) had been the first to suggest that the *Bacwezi* should be seen as spirits, unconnected to a human dynasty. From the Buhaya perspective Schmidt (1978) also concluded that the *Bacwezi* were purely spiritual beings linked to Early Iron Age sites over 2000 years old. In the *Bacwezi* or *Embandwa* spirit mediumship cult these spirits voiced opposition against the ruling dynasties. Schmidt did not pose the possibility that later rulers would naturally inherit early power centres. Iris Berger (1973/1980) also stressed the function of resistance to political oppression that was no doubt an important aspect of these cults. Berger's conclusion that the reputation of the *Bacwezi* as a dynasty of flesh and blood resulted from European misinterpretations (1980:66-67) seems to be drawn from the historiography itself rather than from the knowledge retained in traditions of the peoples concerned (Farelius 1993:112).

Katoke (1969:47), Karugire (1971:120), Ogot (1984:503) and Mwambutsya (1987) accepted the historicity of the *Bacwezi*, whom they associated with the creation of an ancient empire, Bunyoro-Kitara. This book will demonstrate that the concept of a Bunyoro-Kitara so-called "empire" is late but nevertheless real to those people who told its story.

In accordance with an interpretation developed from within the perceptual framework of the interlacustrine peoples themselves, I intend to show that they regard those now referred to as *Bacwezi* as people of flesh and blood, who became spirits in the afterlife. However, acceptance of the *Bacwezi* as kings, who after "death" became powerful spirits, does not make me "a die-hard euhemerist" (Tantala 1989:22). Explained from within the overall belief system of the interlacustrine

peoples the *Bacwezi* after death became not gods but rather ancestors, *abazaire*, 'parents' of kings. Kings and commoners alike are subjected to *Bacwezi* ancestral wrath and depend upon their benevolence. As far as my sources will allow, avoiding the risks to go beyond what the data will support, a multi-level understanding of the *Bacwezi* emerges. From within the "the broader cultural continuity of knowledge and beliefs in the region" (Sutton 1993:47) the *Bacwezi* can be interpreted on four levels of reality:

The *Bacwezi*

- as a dynasty, but not necessarily named *Bacwezi*
- as an adopted ancestral clan of the present *Babiito* and *Bahinda* ruling dynasties
- as spirits of the *Bacwezi* or *Embandwa* spirit mediumship cult
- as the name of a clan in Bunyoro and Buhaya

The Search for a Solution

Although the *Bacwezi* have attracted attention over the years, there is no scholarly agreement on a solution to the problem they present. The archaeologist Andrew Reid (1991:79) expressed his doubts about the possibilities for future research on the topic:

> It ought to be stated categorically that attempts to prove or disprove the existence of the Bachwezi are unlikely to be successful.

It is my contention that a contextual historical interpretation of the *Bacwezi* oral traditions and symbolism can shed new light on the problem, if we approach the source material in a different way. Earlier research has failed to fully appreciate the historical potentials in the symbolic content of these traditions.

Here a short reflection about the way scholars have interpreted the function of religious symbols is in place. "The religious vision of the world" embracing interlacustrine oral traditions requires another understanding of symbolism than the structuralist conviction that the basic function of symbols is to convey glimpses from an

ever-hidden reality (cf. Vansina 1986:36, by Jung theorised as "the unconscious and its expression as archetypes" (B. Morris 1987:173).[23] I will follow Hultkrantz' position on the problem of the function of religious symbolism, because his insight derives from his own field work experience and is not a product of "armchair" theories. To the historian of religions, says Hultkrantz, "[...] the word symbol refers to expressions of religious contents held by the believers themselves, and the function of the symbol is consequently sought within the religious system" (1984:102). One such expression of religious content takes the form of myth, a concept that in interlacustrine historiography has been variously understood either as a poetic tale about supernatural beings devoid of historical facts or referring to something false that cannot be proven by observable evidence.

Wrigley (1958:11) had denounced the historicity of the *Bacwezi* he relegated to the mythical era of "Uganda's prehistory" because he thought that far more had been "demanded of tribal tradition than it is actually capable of performing". Nyakatura (1947/1973), whom Wrigley had challenged, regarded the *Bacwezi* as historical kings of Bunyoro. On the other hand, Nyakatura held that the traditions about their predecessors, the *Batembuzi*, dealt with myth, so he placed them in the dim past under the heading of "pre-history" (1973:1). For Nkore the Colonial Officer Dr H.F. Morris (1962:1-2) organised the oral traditions he examined in three consecutive stages. He thought the stories of the pre-*Bacwezi* kings dealt with "myths and not with facts", because they accounted for the origins of the people telling of their supernatural rulers. The account of the second dynasty, the *Bacwezi*, was considered more problematic. Here opinion was divided as to whether these tales about the members of a marvellous clan, who established a vast kingdom which they ruled for a couple of generations and then mysteriously disappeared were or were not founded on historical facts. Thirdly, the accounts of the *Bahinda* dynasty were deemed basically to be authentic, factual accounts of the fortunes of the *Omugabe's* kingdom and its development during the last 300 years or so (1962:1-2).

M.S.M. Kiwanuka (1971) translated and edited Sir Apolo Kaggwa's (1901) *Basekabaka be Buganda*, 'the Kings of Buganda'. The Buganda

dynastic chronology starts off with *Kintu* (1971:194, 195). Kiwanuka argued that the first of the three versions of traditions presented about *Kintu*, where *Kintu* descends from heaven, should be regarded as myth and not history, because it dealt with Creation, hence rather belonging to the religion of the Baganda than to their history. Traditional histories of kingdoms and dynasties usually begin with Creation, wrote Kiwanuka. Therefore, when interpreting such sources, it was deemed "important to determine where myth ends and history begins" (1971:1-2). Beattie (1960:13) had examined the "cycles of dynastic myths" in Bunyoro, which he thought merged into "traditional history" subsequently to "link up (if the series regarded chronologically) with the 'real' history". Beattie did not seem to interpret the Kinyoro dynastic traditions as "real history" until the Europeans emerged on the interlacustrine scene from the 1860's (cf. 1960:16).

Ugandan academics sometimes voice the perception that the *Bacwezi* concept is a mere myth and not a historical reality (cf. Okot p'Bitek 1971:11). Of course, any literal interpretation of the traditions about the people called *Bacwezi*, who just appeared and then disappeared like that, would make their historical reality highly improbable. The crux of the matter is how we define the concept of myth. Anthropologists, folklorists and historians of religions have attempted to define what is meant by the term "myth" and how "myth" relates to "history". Considering how anthropologists usually treated myth, Evans-Pritchard (1961:8) wrote that if they did not use the blanket-word tradition beneath which all stories about the past were included, they would use "history" to refer to what seems to be more or less probable. "Myth" would then be used to refer to what seems to be improbable or impossible. Then they have missed the point, because

> myth and history are in important respects different in character, not just in the degree to which they can be substantiated by appeal to evidence or to the laws of natural science. Hence a story may be true yet mythical in character, and a story may be false and yet historical in character (Evans-Pritchard 1961:8)

In common parlance the term "myth" is often used as a synonym for "error" or "fallacy" (Dundes 1984:1). It would then refer to something false or non-verifiable by observable facts. When historians talk about "the Hamitic myth", they use the word "myth" in this negative sense of the word, understood as something false that cannot be proven by the laws of scientific investigation. The essence of myth as it has come down to us from the Greek word *muthos*, 'word' or 'speech' (Kees W. Bolle 1987:261), appeals to another dimension of reality. To understand better the difference in character between "history" and "myth" we must go beyond definitions arrived at by historians dealing with the problem of myth perceived as "a communal style of reasoning and exposition in non-literate cultures" (Miller 1980:20). In an article entitled "The elusive myth and the history of religions" Håkan Rydving (1997:18) states that "the concept of myth has in general been conceived as a religious category of written texts". He concludes:

> By our choice of strategy to define myth we decide ourselves how difficult it is to grasp its significance. The wider we define the concept of myth, the more important becomes the questions about the concept of religion.

No definition of "religion" is helpful for the purpose of this study, because the very concept of religion has been developed from within the context of theologians working with written texts, not with orally transferred traditions in non-literate societies, whose languages have no word for it. The concept of religion, as it has become understood in modern socio-political discourse in the Great Lakes region, does not apply to the spiritual experience of the interlacustrine peoples, the faith of their ancestors that embrace every aspect of life. The folklorist William Bascom (1984:9) brings up the element of faith that constitutes oral traditions understood as "myths". He proposed that "myth" could be regarded as one aspect of a category of verbal art he labelled "prose narratives" accepted on faith:

> Myths are prose narratives which, in the society in which they are told, are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past.

> They are accepted on faith, they are taught to be believed and they can be cited as authority in answer to ignorance, doubt or disbelief.

According to this definition the *Bacwezi* oral traditions are "myths". The belief in the *Bacwezi* as founders of the kingdom of Nkore was considered fundamental to Nkore society. "No old Munyankore", wrote Karugire (1971:104), "would take seriously the suggestion that the *Bacwezi* did not exist". Their existence is accepted on faith and on that criteria the category of prose narratives that tell of their achievements would be termed "myth", whether fact or fancy.

When studying "the evidence of religious documents in human traditions", [whether transferred as written texts or oral narratives] "What is true?" should not be the principal question for the historian of religions to pose. Central to the study of myth, as a religious expression of sacred speech, are questions that touch on what societies have found necessary to point to and preserve as centrally valid for their entire existence (Bolle 1987:262-263). The expression of such existential values transcend human time and space. Paul Ricoeur (1987) has determined the fundamental dividing line between "myth" and "history" by the concept of time:

> At first glance, myth and history appear to be complete opposites. To be sure, they are both narratives, that is to say, arrangements of events into unified stories, which can then be recounted. But myth is a narrative of origins, taking place in a primordial time, a time other than that of everyday reality; history is a narrative of recent events, extending progressively to include events that are further in the past but that are, nonetheless, situated in human time (1987:273).

Myth, then, relates to founding events taking place in a time before all history, in *illo tempere*, when "the creation and arranging of the Cosmos took place, as well as the revelation of all the archetypal activities by gods, ancestors or culture heroes" (Mircea Eliade 1958/1979:395). However, as Hultkrantz (1984:104) has observed, "the insight that religious symbols are reared in the subconscious realm" permeating much of Eliade's thinking has been influenced by Jung. To Eliade creation took place in a time outside history, the ideal state of human

beings, because he saw this world of change as a "world of suffering and of 'history'" (1958/1979:183). Myth can be a re-enactment of this ideal state, fusing present and past, the archetypal not being bound to time and space (cf. Evans-Pritchard 1961:8).

How do these ideas relate to the reality of the peoples under investigation? If we regard myth as a symbolic expression of religious content held by the believers themselves, the function of myth should be sought within the belief system of the peoples who transfer them. "The religious vision of the world" inherent to the traditions told by the peoples living between the lakes in East and Central Africa is based on "spirituality" in a sense that the spirits of the ancestors on all levels of society are believed to participate actively in the lives of human beings. It is my contention that the symbolic content in the traditions we may call myths reflects the invisible world of spirits untied by time and space, at the same time it mirrors the visible world of history.

Wrigley (1958:11-12) had not seen any historical reality behind the symbolic language in the Kinyoro tradition about the last *Mutembuzi Isaza*, "who was detained below the earth while his deputy the moon rose into the sky". He interpreted this episode as "an elemental myth, a splendid piece of fantasy woven round the setting of the sun". Wrigley argued that Fisher's collection of *Twilight Tales* conveyed a more faithful picture of the nature of these traditions as "myths" than for example Nyakatura, who had stripped the story of its mythical content "converting myth into history". In my opinion the *Isaza* tradition clearly assumes the form of myth, which does not preclude that it can be historical in content.[24] On the contrary, it is exactly from the multi-level symbolism exposed in Fisher's collection, her "maternalistic" attitude notwithstanding, that we can infer historical interpretations. Nyakatura's inclination to strip the narrative from its legendary elements in a bid to produce "history" (cf. Wrigley 1958:13, above) was prompted by the prevailing circumstances at the time he wrote his book and exemplifies what can happen, when oral traditions are converted to written texts (cf. Henige 1980:253). A colonial civil servant with a deep commitment to record everything he had learnt

from Banyoro elders through his father, who had served at the king's court,[25] Nyakatura had to make the history of his people acceptable to the world of letters.[26] In the process, some of the symbolic features that provide keys for unlocking the possible historical reality behind the traditions were lost.

I will not call the *Bacwezi* traditions "myth" but will only point to the form some of these tales assumes as to the form of myth, when origins are at stake. An investigation into the origins of the traditions that deal precisely with origins, those traditions that are "myths" by definition, symbolic in form and carriers of religious content, can be prolific to the search for the history of centralised rule in the region. The question "Who instituted the concept of *Bacwezi* and which historical processes impelled them to do so?" should be more important to pose in face of the sources at hand, than determining when "myth ends and history begins" (Kiwanuka 1971:1-2). That is because the time of myth transcends historical time and does not necessarily reflect any ideal time of creation postulated for a time before all history.

In his work among the Pare, the Tanzanian historian Isaria Kimambo (1969:ix) concludes:

> [...] no general theories of methodology can be applied equally to all societies in ... [the region of East Africa] ... a researcher in the field has to adapt his theories to the realities of the society with which he is working.[27]

The *Bacwezi* traditions must be understood within the framework of beliefs and perceptions of the peoples concerned, just as Kimambo asserts. Accordingly, in studying the traditions a number of precepts emerged. These precepts inform the interpretation of the oral evidence:

- Names have meaning.
- Each tradition must be analysed within the context of the people who transfer it.
- Events may be retrospectively rearranged in time.[28]
- A persona may encapsulate a period of history.

- Events may be recast in analogy to other (sometimes previous) events.
- There may be conflation of persona or events.
- Traditions as voiced may be multi-level in content.

Vansina (1965) placed faith in the "so-called 'official' [which in this case would be the Kinyoro version] testimonies as compared with the non-official ones" (Okpewho 1983:116). Berger concurred (1973:34) but felt that it is the "esthetic and structural continuity" of the Kinyoro version that meant it is the original one. This work will demonstrate that the emphasis on the *Bacwezi* has clouded the historical horizon as it was designed to do, but the history is in the traditions waiting to be decoded.

The analysis that follows will rely on historical linguistics for periodisation because oral traditions that are "myths" by definition are timeless in character and do not reflect any successive order of events. However, it is necessary to stress that this study is not historical in the sense that it seeks to uncover every successive stage in the transmission of information. Derived from the socio-economic, spiritual and political contexts the historical-linguistic potentials in names and key terms will be tested. In this way a broad periodisation will be proposed for the history of centralised rule in the region.

The following chapter provides an overview of the linguistic approach to historical reconstruction.

Endnotes

1 *Mbugu* means 'barkcloth' in Luhaya/Runyambo, *ekibugu* in Runyankore/Rukiga (Taylor 1959:151), *orubugo* in Runyoro/Rutooro (Davis 1938/1952:195).

2 The title of Father Pagès' (1933) study on Rwanda is clear enough: *Un Royaume Hamite au centre de L'Afrique.*

3 Wright himself had served both among Luo- and Bantu-speaking peoples. He wrote two articles on Luo religious beliefs: "Some Notes on Acholi Religious Ceremonies", *UJ*, Vol. III, No. 3, Jan. 1936 and "The Supreme Being among the Acholi", *UJ*, Vol. VII, No. 3(?), Jan. 1940.

4 Balyebuga (1974:9) accounts for the theories that had been proposed for the origin of the *Bacwezi*. They are believed to have been white-skinned people from Egypt, Abyssinia, Portugal, "Lost Roman Army" or Luo invaders.

5 K.W. is the pseudonym of Tito Gafabusha Winyi, *Omukama* of Bunyoro from 1924 until 1967, when President Milton Obote abolished Uganda's kingdoms.

6 See for example Onyango-ku-Odongo and Webster eds., 1976, *The Central Luo during the Aconya*, E. A. Literature Bureau, and Denoon, ed., 1972, *A History of Kigezi in South-West Uganda*, Kampala: The National Trust.

7 Katoke contributed with two article in the series, "Karagwe, a Pre-colonial State", *JWH*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1971 and "The Kingdom of Ihangiro", *JWH*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1971. Other scholars were Frederick J. Kaijage, "Kyamutwara", *JWH*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 1971, Abel G.M. Ishumi, "The Kingdom of Kiziba" and Paul Betbeder, "The Kingdom of Buzinza", *JWH*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1971.

8 Beattie (1961, endnote 1) used Raymond Firth's (1959:141) definition of spirit mediumship, which he distinguished from spirit possession and shamanism as "a form of possession in which the person is conceived as serving as an intermediary between spirits and men" (Berger 1973:57). According to Firth's definition, then, it would not be correct to use the term "shaman" for the *embandwa*, as Svein Bjerke (1981) has done. My research assistants used the term "spirit possession" as did Beattie in his writings. In accordance with Firth's definition I will use "spirit mediumship" about the cult, because the *embandwa* mediums in the Great Lakes region do not fall into the state of trance of a shaman, whereby they are perceived to visit other places "while their bodies are sunk in death-like ecstatic trances" (Arbman 1963:348).

9 Hans Cory was known among the Bahaya as a respectable man. *Nalya n'ebyara*, 'he ate with his fingers' and "he slept in our houses". Information from Mzee Richard Mutembei, Seminar on the *Bacwezi*, 7-8/10 1992.

10 The *Buswezi* society had spread by *Sumbwa* immigrants to most of the bigger towns of the country in Tanzania (Cory 1955).

11 "... to be seen nowadays adorned with 'beads, bells, brass and curiosities' would be to invite prosecution under the Witchcraft Ordinance in the Native courts" (Beattie 1961:20).

12 There are also an increasing number of "non-Cwezi 'black' embandwa", approached by the technique of spirit mediumship on an individual basis. These spirits are perceived as frightening and less benevolent forces that the Banyoro need to come to terms with by traditional means. When Beattie did the research for the paper discussed, the group cults concerning the "white" *Bacwezi* had declined almost to extinction, while the "black" *embandwa* cult was steadily growing.

13 Beattie (1961:17-18) surmised that the term *nyakatagara* for 'household medium' is used specifically about the female medium, while a male is simply called *kibandwa* or *mucwezi*. Buchanan (1969:2), on the other hand, states that *nyakatagara* is the term for a household medium in Bunyoro, whether male or female. I believe the latter source is more in accordance with Kinyoro and interlacustrine practice.

14 Beattie (1971:50) here refers to Wrigley (1958) with the following reservation in a footnote: "But *somebody* must have built the earth fortifications at *Bigo* and elsewhere!"

15 Carole Buchanan's unpublished paper entitled "Bacwezi Cult, The religious revolution in Western Uganda" (1969) was presented at the History Seminar, Makerere University. I am grateful to Mr Simon Baitwababo, who kindly lent me his copy of this paper, which was missing from all of the Makerere libraries (February 1992).

16 Here Berger quotes the work of Stanley (1891:345), *In Darkest Africa*.

17 Berger draws especially on the statements by Emin Pasha quoted from Schweinfurth et al. (1888:112).

18 *Enanga* is a trough cither used to accompany the *nanga epos*, which is "an oral performance, which exists only as a momentary aesthetic event, not as a fixed, permanent text. As such, its occurrence, its content, and indeed, its final form is ultimately determined by the socio-historical and performance context" (Mulokozi 1987, abstract of thesis).

19 Here Tantala (1989:64, endnote 54) refers to the following works: Jan Vansina, "The Use of Process-Models in African History." in Vansina et al. eds. *The Historian in Tropical Africa* (1964:375-389) and Malcom R. Crick, "Anthropology of Knowledge", *Annual Review of*

Anthropology 11 (1982:303). See also Ladislav Holy and Milan Stuchlik, *The Structure of Folk Models* (London, 1981).

20 Tantala (1989:491) quotes Bashizi Cirhagarhula (1981:218), "Mythe hamite, formations étatiques et acculturation interlacustres". He thought that "the role of long-horned cattle in seizure and centralization of power under new dynastic families has been greatly exaggerated" and opts for an examination of the process of acculturation that was occurring, as new pastoralist groups arrived and interacted with agriculturalists in different local communities.

21 Schoenbrun's terminology referring to the "creative" power of prophesy was inspired by J. Janzen's (1992) work, *Ngoma: Discources of Healing in Central and Southern Africa* (Schoenbrun 1994-1995:279-280).

22 *Omukama* E. Rukamba of Kyamutwara preferred to use the term *abazaire*, 'parents' about his ancestors (BFFN/2:49, 1991).

23 Hultkrantz (1984:104) has observed that "the archetype of Jung [1964] and the structure of Lévi-Strauss [1963] have much in common, despite the divergent orientations towards content in Jung and formal patterns of opposition in Lévi-Strauss". The social anthropologist Lévi-Strauss developed the structuralist approach of binary oppositions (e.g. nature-culture) as a method to interpret oral traditions. This approach has not only been regarded as "essentially synchronic and ahistorical", but also as an "imposition of Western dualistic concepts onto the thought of preliterate people" (B. Morris 1987:288-289). Of interest to students of history of religions and social sciences in general Brian Morris' work *Anthropological Studies of Religion* (1987) offers a deep analysis of Jung's and Lévi-Strauss' theories.

24 The full context of the *Isaza* tradition needs separate treatment, which has to be exposed in another work.

25 Godfrey Uzoigwe (Nyakatura 1973:xv-xxix), who edited the translated texts of Nyakatura's (1947) Runyoro version, gives extensive autobiographical notes on the author in his "Introduction". Uzoigwe is of the view that Nyakatura's work that was first published in Runyoro by the White Fathers' in Canada in 1947, is the best work on Bunyoro history.

26 Noteworthy, Nyakatura wrote his "history", when Kinyoro had been seriously challenged and surpassed in the region by the emerging Buganda state power (see for example Oliver 1964:306). On top of that, as a consequence of colonial strategies, Bunyoro had lost several important counties to Buganda. On behalf of the Bunyoro kingdom Nyakatura was personally involved in negotiations with the British to reclaim these counties. Uzoigwe (Nyakatura 1973:xv-xvi) states that he wrote his book in order "to win sympathy for his people's struggle for the return of 'the lost counties"'.

27 Quotation from Okpewho, *Myth in Africa*, 1983:117.

28 Sutton (1993:38) has rightly warned against the "retrospective" element in interlacustrine historiography.

4

Languages and the History of Languages in the Great Lakes Region

Over 35 years ago, Prof. Bethwell Ogot requested Christopher Ehret and others versed in historical linguistics to initiate new approaches in the search for the early history of the African continent.[1] Although much progress has been achieved in this field, the repercussions of the Hamitic hypothesis still lingers on in terminologies Ugandan researchers use about "ethnic groups ... subsumed in larger categories in anthropological literature" such as the "Nilo-Hamitic" (Byarugaba 1998:180).[2] The achievements of historical linguistic research have brought new terminology with capacity to identify the interlacustrine population groups in terms of dynamic speech communities instead of groups defined by ethnicity. But remnants of Hamitic thinking and terminology disturb the discussion related to the *Bacwezi* problem so much that the development and history of languages must be thoroughly accounted for. This investigation will show that there is no loan word evidence or remains from other language groups in present interlacustrine Bantu-speaking peoples languages that derive from any Hamitic source whatsoever.

Problems of Historical Linguistic Methods

A wealth of oral traditions brought forward through the generations elucidates events of recent centuries. But oral traditions in themselves have no chronology. And genealogical lists, which in any case were devised to validate the then existing realities (cf. Henige 1980:240-261), would only scratch the surface of the deep time perspective needed to gain more knowledge of the history of interlacustrine centralised rule. Unless we look for information from more distant centuries than oral traditions can tell us about,[3] we will not get a relevant picture of the complicated web of interactions and interrelationships of various peoples in the past that have shaped and influenced the interlacustrine

societies of today. Moreover, in a longer time perspective, what we see today may prove to be the outcome of recent power constellations and ethnic claims emanating from late social structures (Schoenbrun 1990:112).

Yet it is from the present we must start in order to dig deep down into the past until we reach the more distant centuries, long forgotten by oral traditions. Here language and linguistic evidence may provide a bridge not only between peoples but also between periods of time. In his seminal treatment of time perspective in the absence of written records Edward Sapir (1916:76) showed how language change could be related to chronology:

> The greater the degrees of linguistic differentiation within a stock, the greater is the period of time that must be assumed for the development of such differentiations.

M. Swadesh pioneered the attempt to arrive at a time scale arising from Sapir's observation. When he tested the 100-word list, he found that "the fundamental everyday vocabulary of any language–as against the specialised or 'cultural' vocabulary–changes at a relatively constant rate" (Swadesh 1952:452), an observation that offered a way to convert these shared cognation levels into a rough chronology (Blench 1993:126).

Ehret (1968a) built on Sapir and Swadesh and Schoenbrun (1990, 1993a) applied Ehret's method to the specific context of the Bantu-speaking Great Lakes' region. Ambrose has evaluated various approaches to the study of the past in Africa, concluding:

> Although oral traditions may speak eloquently of recent contacts and local movements, loan word strata reveal contacts far beyond the reaches of human memory (Ambrose 1982:111).

If a word clearly deviates from the usual morphological structure or expected pronunciation of a given language then it can be identified as a loan word in that language. In the words of Ehret (1971:18):

> ... the strongest criteria for loanword determination tend to be morphological and phonological. By these criteria the presence and source of a loanword are indicated by the occurrence of features in the word which cannot be explained by grammatical or sound changes in the language in which the word occurs but which can be explained in terms of such developments in another language.

Ehret's basic assumption, with which there is no reason to quarrel is that the spread of loan words in preliterate eras could only occur through direct contact between speakers of the languages. Relative dates for contacts between peoples in the past are established by determining that a borrowed word expresses a sound change in the borrowing language. By ordering the sound changes and loan word sets Ehret (1968a, 1998) has worked out periods of expansion and differentiation within speech communities and also periods of interaction between different language groups.[4]

Over the last thirty or so years in applying his method to a good number of African languages, Ehret's findings have not been accepted without controversy. In a review article on Ehret's Southern Nilotic History (1971), Long (1972:94) justifiably remarked that he had not explained in detail the method he uses. Neither had he given any "complete listing of his numerous comparative 'basic' and 'cultural' vocabularies for linguists, historians and other interested disciplines" to verify his interpretations.[5] However, about twenty years later, writing on recent developments in African language classification and their implications for prehistory, Blench is appreciative of Ehret's approach. He is of the opinion that "the technique pioneered by Ehret in the 1960's, the cross-comparison of words of cultural significance", is more promising for the pre-historian than the methods of lexicostatistics and glottochronology, which, he writes, have now been almost abandoned (Blench 1993:126-127). Nevertheless, when scrutinising the dissertation of Schoenbrun (1990) which depended on Ehret's work, it seems clear that Ehret's method still appears to be a modification and further development of lexicostatistics and glottochronology in combination.[6]

Before Schoenbrun could compare "the words of cultural significance" or loan word sets needed to gain an understanding of contacts and interactions within and between different speech communities in the Great Lakes region, he had to classify the languages. He constructed 100-word core vocabulary lists for a total of 53 languages within the region and in outlying areas (Schoenbrun 1990:105, 363-420). These lists are composed of basic words least likely to be borrowed across linguistic boundaries.[7] All these 53 languages were postulated to be derived from one mother tongue, proto-Great Lakes Bantu. *Proto-* is the period of mutual understanding between dialects, a period of dialect formation. The proto-period as the period when dialects are formed before they develop into separate languages should be used to represent several centuries (Schoenbrun 1990:165, note 22). To determine how the Great Lakes Bantu successor languages were related to one another, he first compared core vocabulary, counting the rate of cognation for each pairing of the languages under study. That is, he compared the core vocabulary lists of two languages at a time to find out how many words were still shared in those languages, establishing a preliminary genetic sub-grouping of the languages involved. Higher percentages of cognation show more recent divergences, while lower percentages show earlier divergences. These rates of cognation "measure the retention of older, proto-language forms, the presence of which reflects the continuous transmission of language from generation to generation" (Schoenbrun 1990:111).

Schoenbrun then proceeded to employ group averaging. This revision to lexicostatistics gained currency in Great Lakes Bantu studies through the work of, for example Nurse and Philippson (1980). Group averaging arrives at a figure that is "the distillation of a large range of cognate percentages into a single percentage" (Schoenbrun 1990:114).

Schoenbrun next used glottochronology to establish rough dates for the various branchings of the tree of genetic relationships derived through lexicostatistics, and then averaged. He used the empirically derived mean retention rates of 85-86 % of words in the 100-word list in a single language per thousand years, yielding 73-74 % mean

shared retention between two languages after 1000 years of divergence from their common ancestral language.[8] Schoenbrun attempted to corroborate this picture of genetic relationships by establishing patterns of innovations in vocabulary, sound and grammar, apparently ignoring the fact that not just vocabulary, but also sound (M.J. Mould 1981) and grammatical changes (Kuteva 2000) can spread through borrowing.

It is this classification that is displayed as the family tree of Great Lakes Bantu (Schoenbrun 1990:136) and provides the base for placing the proposed language communities on the map. As for the problem of geographical spread of languages Schoenbrun (1990:106) followed the principle of least moves, first proposed by Sapir (1916). Of course societies and their languages would not "freely reproduce themselves across the map but expand in ways constrained by social, economic and physical geography" (Schoenbrun 1990:122). Furthermore, the experience of historical linguists has taught them that "language spread tends to be directed gradually or progressively outward from the languages' previously established territories" (Schoenbrun 1990:122). This process is postulated to have begun with a chain of mutually intelligible dialects gradually becoming distinct languages, as has been indicated above. Accordingly, by working "backwards up the tree-diagram" Schoenbrun produced maps that reflected his analysis of the break-up and formation of different speech communities over time (Schoenbrun 1990:185-188).

This short exposition on Ehret and Schoenbrun makes it clear that their methods are based on lexicostatistics. But it seems that their efforts to find independent evidence to check the integrity for the subgroups in their classification have been intended to present a more reliable work than previous scholars had.[9] Ehret's "cross-comparison of words of cultural significance", as appreciated by Blench (1993:127), mentioned above, can unquestionably be used to validate the use of lexicostatistics. The distribution of loan words of cultural significance from non-Bantu languages in Bantu languages confirms the integrity of subgroups. But the significance of loan word sets "as they occur at different levels of a classification is that the historian may then infer who was involved in

the contact and what was transmitted" (Schoenbrun 1990:108). Ehret and Schoenbrun identified loan word sets that document the other actors on the stage of Great Lakes' history.

The method cannot produce exact dates, and neither Schoenbrun nor Ehret have claimed it could do so. However such quibbles as Blench referring to "uneven decay in particular items on the Swadesh list", shown in the study by Grace (1967) from the context of the Pacific, are misguided. The usefulness of the method did not derive from ever positing that the individual rates of decay were identical (Schoenbrun 1990:119). Ulf Drobin's (1991) criticism of genealogical tree and lexicostatistics may have its point; but they are tools that seem to work, in spite of the lack of a formal theoretical basis. But his doubts about whether there is a correspondence between language and culture (cf. Oliver 1982b:167) surely must be based on a confusion of linguistic and historical processes.[10]

To counter the critique raised against the presuppositions inherent to glottochronology, Schoenbrun simply states that "the method is not a matter for belief or disbelief, but a description and application of the repeatedly observed outcome of a particular linguistic process" (Schoenbrun 1990:119-120). But is this particular linguistic process in itself the result of a theoretical construct? Less linguistically inclined experts in African history doubt the findings of Ehret and Schoenbrun, because they are of the opinion that their research results are not founded on empirically derived data, but theories.[11] Ehret himself states that glottochronology "is not widely in favour", but asserts that his experience has taught him that when used with caution, it can "provide some inklings of a time-scale for linguistic events" (Ehret 1982:19). Especially where all other indications of absolute time-depth are lacking, glottochronology has proved to be useful when corroborated with archaeological or other data (Vansina 1990:16).[12]

In his review article on Schoenbrun's (1997) monograph *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Cultural Vocabulary: Etymologies and Distribution*[13] Batibo (2003:193) singles out some of

the most pertinent problems of the method. The following points need to be quoted in full:

> Although the lexicostatistical method is the most commonly used approach in determining the degree of historical language relationships, because of its practicability, it is also the most controversial because it can easily give false results, especially if based on as short a list as only 100 words. ... there are a number of factors which can distort the cognation figures such as choice between synonyms, leaving out words with close semantic fields, decision of cognition and undetected borrowings and diffusion elements.

Having highlighted these problems comprehensively, Nurse (1994-1995:67), aptly summarised the usefulness of the method: "lexicostatistics [of which glottochronology is a subset] is like an archaeological survey, not an in-depth excavation". So the best approach seems to be a combination of all possible ways of coming to terms with the rich potential to be extracted from language and linguistic evidence to shed more light on the African past (cf. Nurse 1994-1995:67).[14]

The proposed history of the pioneering eras of the peoples between the Great Lakes who now speak Bantu languages, as has been interpreted through the lens of historical linguistics, correlated with other appropriate source material, provides the foundation for this book. Several distinct speech communities of completely different origin were involved in the history of the initial settlement in the region. They left imprints on Great Lakes culture, which are still discernible, although Bantu speech and political organisation prevailed.

Proposed Early Settlers in the Present Bantu-speaking Interlacustrine Region

The region between the Great Lakes attracted settlers from early times. Palynologists have detected a human imprint on the highland environment along the Nile-Congo divide in Kigezi possibly as early as 3000 BC (Schoenbrun 1993a:4, 1991).[15] Schoenbrun (1990, 1993a) subsequently correlated their research results with his linguistic findings, identifying the settlers that preceded Bantu-speakers on the land. The proposed earliest settlers could have been Nilo-Saharan Central Sudanic-

speakers. Other early settlers of the Nilo-Saharan language phylum were Eastern Sudanic-speakers. In their more recent publications, Schoenbrun (1997, 1998) and Ehret (1998) renamed the mentioned Eastern Sudanic-speakers Eastern Sahelian (Sog). Furthermore, there is loan word evidence in Great Lakes Bantu successor languages that can be attributed to another non-Bantu-speaking language group, the Afro-Asiatic *Tale* Southern Cushites.

NILO-SAHARAN Central Sudanic- and Eastern Sahelian-speakers

Sudanese are important actors in the scenario of early interlacustrine settlement before the advent of the Bantu-speakers around 1000 BC (Schoenbrun 1990). There is evidence of two roughly contemporaneous, distinct branches of Sudanic speech communities in the Great Lakes region. Schoenbrun (1990:178) sees them as "distant cousins". In their wider African context, these languages belong to the NILO-SAHARAN principle language phylum, a phylum that has been suggested by Blench (1993:133) to be the oldest after Khoisan (hunters and gatherers).[16] Although Nilo-Saharan comprises a relatively low number of languages, it is the second most diverse African language family, a fact that argues in favour of its antiquity (Blench 1993:133). Ehret, in the same publication (1993:104-125), elaborates its enormous time depth and historical complexity.

The sub-classification so far worked out divides the Nilo-Saharan language family into two primary co-ordinate branches. The second of these branches, the Sudanic, itself divides into a complex array of branches and subgroups. The Proto-Sudanic period goes so far back in history that it is impossible to get even a vague time indication for its emergence (Ehret 1993:117). The two main branches of Sudanic are Central Sudanic and Northern Sudanic. Correlating his linguistic evidence with archaeological findings, Ehret traced the possible earliest time of Nilo-Saharan food-production to his postulated Northern Sudanic settlement. He suggested that "[...] the key development in early Nilo-Saharan culture history was the adoption or creation of a food-producing way of life and not a water-based, food-collecting

economy" (Ehret 1993:104), as had previously been proposed by Sutton (1974). In his later work Ehret (1998:5) has identified it as one of the "three separate ancient food-producing traditions of African inspiration and origin" that would become of seminal importance for the growth of agricultural complexity in East Africa over the last millennium BC. According to these new findings in the field of early African history, food production, along with the raising of cattle, would have begun as early as in the eighth millennium BC in the region somewhere around the Nile in the northern part of the modern nation of Sudan. The main players responsible for the earliest documented food producing system could have been Northern Sudanic-speakers. Ehret elaborates:

> Already by the later eighth millennium, or so the evidence of their reconstructible vocabulary tells us, they had begun to construct the thorn-fenced kind of combined cattle pen and homestead that long remained such an effective style of residence among their distant Eastern Sahelian cultural heirs of later eastern Africa history. Within that homestead they built even then, as both language and archaeology reveal, an early variety of the round, Sudanic style of house (Ehret 1998:6).

Ehret (1998:5) describes this tradition as the Sudanese agripastoral tradition, whose "cultural roots lay in the Saharo-Sudanese Neolithic, an archaeological tradition of the early Holocene in the eastern parts of the southern Sahara". Before dealing with their descendants, Sahelian Eastern Sudanic-speakers relevant to this study, the historical part played by the distantly related Central Sudanese needs to be addressed.

Central Sudanic-speakers

Ehret (1993:107, 122) proposed that around the ninth millennium BC Central Sudanic speech communities existed somewhere in or around the area of the Bahr-el-Ghazel in southern Sudan. Today Central Sudanic-speakers (Madi[17]) reside in the former West Nile, now North West region of Uganda, in the present Nebbi, Arua and Moyo districts.

Central Sudanians' mode of subsistence has been a balanced mix of farming and herding (N. David 1982:83). Basically agricultural peoples with sorghum and finger millet as the long-standing staple foods complemented grains with protein sources from lakes and rivers. Herders

of cattle and small livestock, most Central Sudanic-speaking peoples of today milk their animals and churn butter (Murdock 1959:227-228). Murdock's well-grounded argument that the separation of women and cattle originated among Central Sudanic peoples is important to bear in mind when highlighting cultural origins in the Great Lakes region. It must also be noted that all the Central Sudanic population groups Murdock could survey were "organized in exogamous and often totemic patrisibs, each localized as a clan-community" (Murdock 1959:228).

The Central Sudanic speech communities would have preceded the emergence of Bantu-speakers in the westernmost area of the region. Lexical evidence of grain crops required Schoenbrun to locate the ancient Central Sudanic speech communities vaguely in the areas of the Western Rift, from the northern end of Lake Tanganyika in the south, all the way north-westwards, possibly reaching both shores of Lake Albert, extending beyond its northernmost end. They would have been the first agriculturalists to settle along Lake Albert, in the present kingdoms of Tooro and Bunyoro (Schoenbrun 1990:167-169, 185 [Map.3]). Schoenbrun and Ehret contend that pastoralism was not as important to Central Sudanians as to other early non-Bantu speech communities in the region.

Ambrose, in "Archaeology and Historical Linguistics in East Africa" (1982:104-157) correlating linguistic and archaeological data for the reconstruction of African history, does not mention any peoples of Central Sudanic extraction in his overview of early population movements. Oliver is more positive about the problem at issue. He has expressed doubts about historical linguistic theorising but the research results of the British Institute's archaeological expeditions to the Southern Sudan 1977-1981 made him conclude that "the likelihood that Bantu languages were preceded by Central Sudanic languages throughout the Interlacustrine region is very strong" (Oliver 1982b:166). With respect to the northern reaches, he follows Father Crazzolara (1961), who had observed the frequency of place-names in southern Uganda and northwestern Tanzania of apparently Madi or other Central Sudanic origin. Kamuhangire (1993:66) follows

Phillipson's (1976:11) doubts about the presence of Central Sudanic speakers in the south of the interlacustrine region. McMaster's findings of direct rather than inferential ties between Central Sudanic speech and archaeological remains seemed promising but continue to be debatable.

Eastern Sahelian-speaking Populations

According to Ehret (1993:104-106) the second of the two main branches belonging to the Sudanic primary branch of the Nilo-Saharan language family is Northern Sudanic. Eastern Sudanic falls under this main branch. To complicate matters, Eastern Sudanic, later renamed Eastern Sahelian, is a sub-branch of a sub-branch (Sahelian) of Saharo-Sahelian, itself one of the two main branches of northern Sudanic (Ehret 1993:104-106). Ehret (1993:107) locates the original proto-Eastern Sahelian society as far north as in north-eastern or central northern parts of the present Sudan, as early as around 6000 BC (1993:117 [Figure 6.1]). The Nilotic speech communities emerged many thousand years later as descendants of the Eastern Sahelian-speakers. In his monograph *Southern Nilotic History* Ehret (1971:29) dated the proto-Nilotic period to as early as the third millennium BC. So the Nilotic subgroup with its three branches Western (or River-Lakes), Eastern (or Plains) and Southern (or Highlands), is classified as one of the later subgroups under the Eastern Sahelian sub-branch. It is the Eastern and Southern Nilotes who were formerly called Nilo-Hamites. They were renamed Paranilotes (Oliver 1977:628-629). The Luo-speakers, of immediate concern to this study, belonging to the Western or River-Lakes Nilotes, used to be called 'Nilotes' or 'Nilotes proper' (Sutton 1968/1973:97). The Nilotic speech communities are descendants of the Eastern Sahelian-speakers, all of them linked to the long chain of branches and sub-branches of the Nilo-Saharan principle language phylum.[18]

Ehret explicates the importance of the early Eastern Sahelian (Sudanic) presence in East Africa around 2000 BC, arguing that Eastern Sahelian populations exerted profound influence on Eastern Cushites and perhaps other peoples at that time living in the borderlands between present eastern and northeastern Africa. There is evidence of

a significant early Eastern Sahelian-speaking presence in far southern Ethiopia near the Eastern Rift, where the proto-Eastern Cushitic country is believed to have been located. It is very possible that for example age-set systems were originally an Eastern Sahelian custom that spread to Eastern Cushites (Ehret 1974:47-48). Among the reconstructed proto-Eastern Cushitic vocabulary there is a root for 'bull', *ar-*, which has been shown to be an Eastern Sahelian loan, bearing witness of these contacts (Ehret 1974:93) and of Eastern Sahelians as cattle people.

Ehret devoted only one chapter entitled "An Eastern Sudanic Perspective" (1974:46-55) in a book that dealt mainly with the linguistic evidence of the historical impact of various Cushitic-speaking peoples on East Africans. Only a quarter of the book could be devoted to these peoples because of the deplorable lack of knowledge about these languages and "... also by the great distance in time separating the early eras of Eastern Sudanic importance from the present" (Ehret 1974:47). Fleming (1978:269) opined that however important the Cushites may have been, as is shown in the bulk of the book, it is still the Eastern Sudanic-speaking (Sahelian) peoples who "are really the ones who have been important".

Schoenbrun (1990:176-179) places speakers of a now extinct branch of Eastern Sahelian along, or in proximity to, the Lake Victoria shore before the Bantu speakers arrived. Ehret contends that the sources available for Eastern Sahelian culture point to a more obvious focus on pastoralism than could be suggested for their distant cousins, speaking Central Sudanic languages. In the interlacustrine region Schoenbrun places them north of the Kagera in an area roughly covering the present day Buganda, Busoga and the eastern fringes of Lake Victoria. That is in an area to the east of the Karagwe Depression, "in the lower, opener stretches of grassland ... in the eastern sector of the Great Lakes region" (Schoenbrun 1990:178).

Speech communities of Kuliak-related peoples found in Eastern Uganda (Ik) are the only extant Eastern Sahelian extension so far to the south (Ehret 1993:105, 107). Elsewhere, Eastern Sahelian-speaking

peoples of today are found in scattered patches on the African language map, from the middle Nile basin, reaching all the way from Nubia in the north, in the Sudan, to their westernmost expansion of Wadai in Chad (Ehret 1974:50, note 11, cf. Blench 1993:129). Sub-groups of Eastern Sahelian-speaking peoples now widely distributed on the African map seem to have had a far-reaching historical role both in time and space. There is a possible archaeological reflection of their impact in the northern borderlands of Karagwe, where Chapman (1967) found pottery ware on Kansyore Island in the Kagera River. This Kansyore ware is said to be strikingly similar to early pottery investigated in Khartoum (Chapman 1967:177, Ambrose 1982:133), an observation whose validity for historical connections have been questioned (Sutton 1971:157-158, Collett and Robertshaw 1980:141). The correlation of Kansyore ware with Eastern Sahelian-speakers is a recent suggestion. Before further archaeological investigations had shed more light on the problem of identifying ancient pottery styles in East Africa, N. David (1982:82) wrote that "the Kansyore Ware of the Lake Victoria Basin could represent the arrival of Central Sudanic speakers in that area". This proposition was an admittedly problematic one, nevertheless, Ehret credited Central Sudanians with Kansyore pottery as recently as 1988 (pp. 6-20). He appears to have written that article before he arrived at the conclusion the linguistic evidence he had argued portended a Central Sudanic presence in reality documented an early Eastern Sahelian presence.[19]

Only rather recent archaeological materials from widely distributed sites have been recognised as belonging to one single tradition: the Oltome, which includes the one that was formerly called Kansyore ware.[20] So the shards found by Chapman (1967) on the borderland of Karagwe are now connected to the Oltome ware that has been linked to possible early Eastern Sahelian settlements. Schoenbrun (1990:289 -290) provisionally accepts the correlation between speakers of Eastern Sahelian, probably Kuliak, with the Oltome tradition. Ehret has subsequently (1998) published his revised attributions, already the basis for Schoenbrun's conclusions (1990).

AFRO-ASIATIC-speaking Cushites

Before I learnt of Ehret's research, the root of *-tare* emerged as a key cultural term in Karagwe and the interlacustrine region (Farelius 1978). Ehret proposed that **-tale*, 'lion' was a "Nyanza Southern Cushitic loan word in Western Lacustrine Bantu" (1974:83). The latter speech community was to be called the Great Lakes Bantu in the terminology of Schoenbrun that we have adopted above. It was the root **-tale* that would later be considered important enough to become eponymous for Schoenbrun's (1990:171-176, 1993:9) postulated early Great Lakes Southern Cushitic speech community.

The Cushitic languages have generated controversy in African historical linguistic scholarship. Joseph Greenberg, in *The Languages of Africa* (1966:42), places Cushitic as one of the five branches together with Semitic, Berber, Chadic and the extinct ancient Egyptian, belonging to the AFRO-ASIATIC language phylum. Cushitic-speakers are among the peoples formerly termed Hamitic (Huntingford 1963:58-93, Sutton 1968/1973:96). They have been described as being responsible for one of the most important early population movements in African history. Ehret (1998:5) now associates the second early agricultural tradition as being important to later interlacustrine history with the Cushitic-speaking peoples, which he characterises as the Erythraean agripastoral tradition. He estimates its cultural roots to be traced to an as yet archaeologically undefined "Erythraean Neolithic", possibly originating in the Red Sea hills, perhaps datable to the very early Holocene, from around 8000 BC.

The language phylum where the Cushites belong may be termed Afroasiatic, but this name in no way implies an extra African origin:

> The Cushites are just as much native Africans, so far as any biological, archaeological, or linguistic study can tell, as the Bushmen of South Africa and the Pygmies of the Congo, some of whom are lighter in skin color. There is no cogent evidence nowadays to show that Cushitic languages or Cushitic-speaking peoples ever lived outside of Africa, certainly not in Europe and not in Asia (not even in Arabia) (Fleming 1978:273).

Ehret, who followed the path opened up by Greenberg (cf. 1966:67), gives the root **taal-*, 'lioness,' as a Southern Cushitic loan word in proto-lacustrine Bantu, (*-tale/-tare*) with the meaning of lion in general (Ehret 1980:168). According to Ehret's analysis, then, **taal-*, 'lioness', is a Southern Cushitic root, the vowel a long *aa*, that has in the form *-tale/-tare,* 'lion', through direct contacts and interactions spread to the ancient people speaking the mother tongue, the proto-language, of the present Bantu-speakers in the region.

As has been shown above, in Schoenbrun's terminology their ancestral speech community is called proto-Great Lakes Bantu (cf. Schoenbrun 1990:110). Consequently, the Southern Cushitic loan word **-tale* is postulated to have been retained in many of the languages spoken by the successive generations of Bantu-speakers, as they split up, gradually forming the present interlacustrine Bantu language groups and dialects (cf. Schoenbrun 1993a:31).

The initial *t* in the Southern Cushitic **taal-*, 'lioness', can be demonstrated to denote "the general Afroasiatic t feminine" (Greenberg 1960:207). A grammatical feature alien to Bantu usage indicates that the word is a loan. That very feature was transferred into Great Lakes Bantu-speakers' language, where its original meaning was lost. Moreover, a comparative list of Afroasiatic words for 'lion' gives the Cushitic (Somali): *a:r* (Greenberg 1966:59), clarifying the origin of the loan.

Cushitic (Somali) *a:r*	= lion
Great Lakes Bantu-*tare*	= lion

Clearly, there is correspondence in meaning, but what about sound?[21] There is a long 'a:' in the Cushitic variant, while the Great Lakes Bantu 'a' is short.[22] Whether this distinction bears any significance to our conclusions will hopefully become clear in the course of this book.

Who are the Cushites? They are not to be mistaken for the inhabitants of the ancient Kush civilisation in the present Sudan, which flourished from around the 8th Century BC to the 4th Century AD.

African scholars have preferred to call this culture Meroitic, after its centre, Meroe.[23] Noteworthy, the ancient kingdom of Meroe is the only sub-Saharan old kingdom with a script system. But the Meroitic script was not deciphered until the beginning of the present century, when Claude Rilly could demonstrate that it is an Eastern Sudanic language, closest to Nubian and other similar languages (Rilly, C. 2007).

Therefore the Cushites of concern for the study are of a different stock. Remains of early stone-bowl using cattle keepers found at sites in Kenya's Rift Valley and the surrounding highlands have been associated with Cushitic populations. That hypothesis was first based on the survival of Southern Cushitic speakers still existing as isolated remnants in eastern Kenya, the Mbulu Highlands and the Usambara Hills in northern Tanzania. It has been argued that these communities must be remaining pockets of previously more widespread populations (Ambrose 1982:113). Ehret spearheaded careful scholarly attention devoted to various Southern Cushitic settlements in the earliest periods of greater East African history (cf. Schoenbrun 1993a:15, note 43). Originating on the fringe of the southern Ethiopian highlands, the Southern Cushites are likely to have spread southwards along the Eastern Rift as early as the third millennium BC, gradually assimilating or influencing previous populations of hunters and gatherers. Southern Cushites introduced stock-raising and grain cultivation to eastern Africa and the proposed reconstruction of proto-Southern Cushitic vocabulary shows that they may have bled as well as milked their cattle (Ehret 1968b/1974:153 and 1974:7-8).

Southern Cushites practised circumcision and clitoridectomy before their spread into eastern Africa (Murdock 1959:337). The prohibition against eating fish must be equally ancient (Ehret 1971:79). Ehret does not find any evidence that the early Southern Cushites had any kind of chiefly political organisation, probably because he could find no modern Cushitic people under such kind of centralised rule. Nor has he found chief-ship through most of the areas that were formerly Southern Cushitic. The same scholar is of the opinion that "dispersed homestead settlement may have been the general pattern", an observation he has

made for Southern Cushitic communities of today (Ehret 1974:9). In his comprehensive work *An African Classical Age* (1998:160-161) we are told that the incidence of patrilineal clans is a feature that can be reconstructed earlier than the proto-Southern Cushitic period. The role of the clan head seems to have been confined to responsibilities as regards religious observances and possibly to the task of allotting cultivable land. There is no indication, however, that Cushitic leadership terminology entailed comparable symbolism inherent to reconstructed terminology for Bantu-speaker's early "kin chiefs". The latter would have been perceived as "'owner' of the kin group", a metaphor that would have been inconceivable in Southern Cushitic contexts.

Ehret's research result considering the Southern Cushitic belief system is of great importance to the field of religious studies and theology. On account of the evidence from the vocabulary, Ehret (1998:145) has proposed that the origin of what later scholars called "Divinity"[24] can have emerged about 7000-6000 BC among proto-Cushitic-speakers, around 2000 years later to spread to the Central Sudanians. That is the concept of:

> a single level of the preternatural, a single spiritual Force or Presence associated symbolically and perhaps literally also with the sky and rain.

Ehret locates this ancient belief system in large parts of eastern Sudan geographical zone, which lies to the north of East Africa. Accordingly, monotheism in its original form would have emerged in Africa long before the rise of Pharaonic Egypt.

To account for the presence of loan words in the Great Lakes Bantu successor speech communities of today, speakers of *Tale* Southern Cushitic, a descendant branch of Rift Southern Cushitic, must have been living in the region, later being absorbed by the Bantu-speakers. According to Schoenbrun's (1990:185) historical linguistic map, the *Tale* Southern Cushites were among the peoples who had settled in the interlacustrine region before ca. 500 BC. It is argued that they occupied an area extending from the south eastern corner of Lake Victoria, somewhere just south of the Grumeti River. Avoiding the lowlands of the southern and western lakeshores, they were supposed to have made

use of ecological zones suitable for herding and grain cultivation that cover an area to the south of the lake, and then expanded northwards following both riverbanks of the Kagera. As it bends sharply eastwards on its course to Lake Victoria, the Kagera River here forms the northern border of the *Tale* Southern Cushitic expansion. Ehret (1998:107) asserts that opportunities for *Tale* Southern Cushites to move in were provided by Bantu-speaking farmers, who had already cleared the forest and bush for cultivation. Loanword evidence bears witness of an economy that may have been predominantly pastoral, centring on the breeding, herding, milking and bleeding of cattle. Although much orientated toward livestock, they may have also cultivated "a couple of varieties of *Sorghum bicolor* and, possibly, *Eleusine corocana*" (Schoenbrun 1990:173-174).

Evidence of food production during the early periods of settlement in the region is confined to research findings from the fields of historical linguistics and paleobotany. Ehret deserves credit for the progress in this respect, but as was indicated above, Schoenbrun has gone still further for the interlacustrine region in particular by strengthening the linguistic argument with data from palynology.

As for the suggested *Tale* Southern Cushitic speech communities in the southern part of the region, no archaeological trace has yet been found there of any of the various traits belonging to the 'Savanna Pastoral Neolithic' tradition that has been related to early Southern Cushitic-speakers along the Eastern Rift.[25] This means that the extension of the proposed physical presence of the *Tale* Southern Cushites into the interlacustrine region before 500 BC could still be debatable. So perhaps to be on the safe side Ehret (1988) did not mention them in his "important overview of the East African interior" (Schoenbrun 1993a:2), written for the UNESCO Volume III of the *General History of Africa*. The early Southern Cushitic influence is here located to the east of the Great Lakes Region (Ehret 1988:620). However, Ehret's more recently proposed (1998:65, Map 6) "Southern Nyanza areal cluster" of Bantu-speakers would explain the occurrence of Southern Cushitic words in Great Lake's Bantu with a *Tale* presence also to the west of

the lake c. 300 BC. The linguistic evidence shows that *Tale* Southern Cushites together with Eastern Sahelians must have influenced at least some of the proto-Great Lakes Bantu community members to establish themselves as cattle raisers (Ehret 1998:64). He (1998:140) believes the *Tale* Southern Cushites were the first specialised cattle raisers in the Great Lakes region. If so, they would leave no traces of material remains, because they would rather have traded pottery with their neighbours than make their own (Ehret 1998:97).

There is provisionally, and that slim, accepted archaeological correlation for one of the three non-Bantu linguistically attested population groups proposed to have settled in the area by 500 BC. That is the above mentioned Oltome tradition, which fits well with the linguistic evidence for early Eastern Sahelian, Kuliak-related speech communities. Neither for the Southern Cushitic nor for the (early) Central Sudanic presence that is required from the linguistic records do we have any confirmation from archaeological findings. The archaeological picture is much clearer for the Bantu-speakers themselves.

The NIGER-CONGO Bantu-speakers

A cursory glance at the present day African language map will reveal the identity of the two most widely spread dominant language families on the continent: the Afro-Asiatic and the Niger-Congo (Blench 1993:129, Figure 7.1). Bantu is a sub-branch of the Benue-Kongo, which is one of the six branches constituting the NIGER-CONGO language family (Blench 1993:128, cf. Greenberg 1966). In his article on the problems of historical linguistic research, Nurse (1994-1995) notes that the Bantu-speaking population on the African continent outnumbers all other language communities.

Scholars agree that the cradle land of the Bantu-speakers lay somewhere in present Cameroon (Phillipson 1985:179 and cf. Blench 1993:129). Greenberg (1966:38) reduced to absurdity any other conclusion than the one that Bantu-speakers moved from their ultimate area of origin, "even more specifically the Central Benue valley" south eastwards. In agreement with the analysis of Herskovits, Ankermann and Frobenius, which make the Guinea Coast area and the Congo basin

part of the same culture area, Greenberg proposes that the original culture of Bantu-speakers would be "a relatively recent south-eastward expansion of the Guinea-coast type of culture".[26] It is this type of culture of West African origin Ehret (1998:5) identifies as the third tradition of African food production that has contributed to agricultural complexity in the Great Lakes region. He has chosen to give them the name "the West-African planting tradition". The linguistic evidence shows that the goat was the only domestic animal Bantu-speakers bred before they advanced into the region around 1000 BC (Schoenbrun 1990:166).

Schoenbrun (1993a:5, note 21) argues that Bantu-speaking farmers settled in the lower and wetter areas on the western fringe of the region, by 500 BC maintaining "their primarily root-cropping horticultural profile" (Schoenbrun 1990:183). He estimates that the speakers of the language ancestral to the future dominant languages in the interlacustrine region stayed on in the western borderlands for about 500 years. Remaining in the ecosystem already mastered, they continued the way of life and subsistence patterns they had previously developed. This Bantu population retained an ancient word *-kumu* (Guthrie C.S.1265) by then meaning 'chief' (Schoenbrun 1990: Table 4.35), which in turn implies a degree of social differentiation. Bantu-speakers had chiefs but stepped out of the rainforest without a prior knowledge of iron working suggesting a degree of social complexity not equalled technologically.

Perhaps Central Sudanic-speaking populations played an important role in introducing metallurgy to their then forest-dwelling proto-Eastern Bantu-speaking neighbors (Schoenbrun 1990:268).

McMaster's (1988:116) evidence from the Uele region to the west strengthens the case for Nilo-Saharan priority in iron working. She managed to obtain eight Central Sudanic glosses related to this technology in one Bantu language alone.

Settlement and Interaction 500 BC to 800 AD

The Great Lakes Bantu-speakers

Correlation of linguistic and archaeological evidence suggests that by 500 BC the ancestors of the present Bantu-speakers in the region, the Eastern Highland-speakers [later called Mashariki (Ehret 1998:13)], had given birth to the proto-language of their immediate successors, the Great Lakes Bantu. Noteworthy, this is most probably the stage in the history of our region when correlation between environment and ethnicity began to give way (Ehret 1998:96). The millennium between 500 BC and 500 AD would have been the era of Great Lakes Bantu-speakers' settlement of the interlacustrine region, a period of interactions among peoples with different languages, ideas and skills. This was the language of the people who spread eastward to settle along lakeshores and riverbanks, which were locations that had been left empty by previous settlers adapted to higher and drier places. Great Lakes Bantu speech prevailed but the cultures of those who would speak languages descended from Great Lakes Bantu would be indelibly marked by the cultures of those whose languages succumbed (Schoenbrun 1990:12-13).

The correlation between the archaeologically attested sites for UREWE pottery and early Bantu-speaking groups in the interlacustrine area is widely accepted (Oliver 1977:622-623, Phillipson 1976:5-6). Peter Schmidt's (1978:24) evidence of ironworking in Buhaya dates as far back as 500 BC and probably earlier. According to Schoenbrun's (1990:186) estimates the Great Lakes Bantu expansion and settlement period lasted to about AD 100.

The intermediate West Nyanza and Western Lakes

Later UREWE ware-bearing sites show a rapid expansion of successor groups of Great Lakes Bantu-speakers: the correlation must be with the intermediate West Nyanza and Western Lakes language communities. Schoenbrun (1990:187) concludes that theirs was a period roughly between AD 100 and 500. Of immediate concern are the West Nyanza communities, because they comprise some of the ancestors of the present Rutara and North Nyanza-speakers. So during those 400

years of early interlacustrine development some predecessors of for example the present Bahaya and the Banyoro could have spoken the same language as that of the Baganda and Basoga. The languages of Rwanda, Burundi, Buha, Bushuubi and Bugufi of the present Western Highlands language group, on the other hand, belonged to intermediate Western Lakes speech communities, which however would still have been just barely mutually intelligible to West Nyanza.[27]

According to Schoenbrun's estimates these intermediate groups started to diverge around 100 AD. He (1990:255) thinks that the period of the intermediate proto-language groups is of special interest because this period could be when clan traditions originated, a proposition whose validity will be tested in the course of this study. Then, approximately 400 years later, the proto-languages of our present language groups began to spread. Schoenbrun (1990:188) places the dispersal area of proto-Rutara speech communities south of the Kagera River, from where they spread from about AD 500.

Rouletted Ceramics-Continuity and Change

The settlement millennium characterised by multilingual interactions drew to an end as Bantu speech prevailed. This Bantu-speaking, grain-farming, cattle-keeping population, possessing a smelting process that differed from that found in association with Urewe ceramics, and indeed an entirely new kind of pottery, emerged into the hitherto unsettled land of the dry interior to the west of Lake Victoria by about 800 AD. Historians have tended to gloss over this truly remarkable transformation. Urewe ceramics were always small, could stand alone, and had incised decorative details. The pots that supersede them can be extremely large, cannot stand alone, and as the term "rouletted" implies have decorative motifs rolled onto the surface.[28]

Robert Soper (1985:31) has classified the various types of roulette decoration on African pottery. Adopting Soper's terminology Graham Connah (1996:210) stressed that there are two forms of particular importance in East Africa: "twisted string roulette and knotted strip roulettes", both made of fibre and designated as "flexible". Oliver (1982a:435), Soper (1985:48-49) and Christiane Desmedt (1991) claim that Nilotic-speaking groups have been responsible for the

introduction of roulette-decorated pottery into our region. In her detailed classificatory work Desmedt accounts for the appearance of the first pottery group characterised by twisted string roulette ca. 800 AD.

McMaster's research results suggest that those who invented the technique of rouletted ceramics were not Nilotic speakers, but Central Sudanese. In her conclusions those who invented the ceramics that replaced the Urewe wares throughout the interlacustrine region after about 700 AD could have been Central Sudanic-speaking people. However, a deeper knowledge of the languages under study may be required for drawing historical conclusions on linguistic processes of change. In a personal communication to the present author the expert in historical archaeology Prof. Merrick Posnansky said: "Historical linguistics will not break through as a tool for the reconstruction of African history until it is in the hands of those who are fluent in the languages they investigate" (p.c, Kampala, 21/10 1996). Anyway, more interdisciplinary research grounded on empirical findings is required in order to establish the full extent of the Central Sudanic contribution to interlacustrine culture.

Summary

The present chapter has dealt with the basis of details for our understanding of the rich cultural diversity that is enshrined in the complex realities of the present Great Lakes societies. We have learnt that nowhere is there any trace of the illusory Hamite, invented for the purpose to support the colonial enterprise. The historical linguistic evidence has shown that, in the long space of time, speakers of three language phyla have contributed to the amalgamation of the interlacustrine culture. Nilo-Saharans and Afro-Asiatic speakers have bestowed technical knowledge in working with iron and specialised pastoralism. As will be amply demonstrated in the following chapters, the exceptional role of the Niger-Congo Bantu-speakers manifested itself by their social capacity. Thus Bantu speech became the medium in which societies were organised. Bantu-speakers' feature of inherited leadership on all levels of reality appears to have played a crucial part in the development of the centralised rule in the region.

Endnotes

1 Personal information from Prof. B.A. Ogot, 5/3 1987, Nairobi. Ehret also dedicated his path-breaking work, *An African Classical Age*, 1998, to his mentor and friend, Bethwell Allan Ogot.

2 Byarugaba's (1998:180-189) contribution to the work *Ethnicity and the State in Eastern Africa* edited by M.A. Mohamed Salih and John Markakis is entitled "Ethnopolitics and the State Lessons from Uganda".

3 It is estimated that the time limit of oral traditions does not go beyond 500 years, cf. Schoenbrun 1990:259.

4 I am indebted to Prof. Oswald Ndoleriire, Institute of Languages, Makerere University, for his expert assistance in interpreting and discussing Ehret's methods (August 1994).

5 The Head of Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics, University of Dar-es-Salaam, Prof. Batibo, aired a similar view. Batibo had found Ehret's evidence fragmentary because he gives few examples to warrant his conclusions (personal information, Dar-es-Salaam, June 1989).

6 However, it should be noted that in his more recent publication *An African Classical Age* Ehret (1998:6, endnote 4) stresses that he did not use glottochronology, when he (1993) worked out a rough chronology for the Northern Sudanic branch of Nilo-Saharan speakers. As will be elaborated below the linguistic evidence argues for the presence of an Eastern Sahelian subgroup of Northern Sudanian in the Great Lakes region.

7 See Schoenbrun 1990:111. In a footnote he also informs the reader that the list he used "was adapted specifically for the study of Bantu languages by Nurse from Swadesh" (1955). Schoenbrun uses the term "non-cultural ('core')" words, in spite of the fact that linguists have criticised this usage. This is because all of language, including vocabulary, is a part of culture.

8 Schoenbrun (1990:120) here follows Anttila (1989:396-397) and Bastin, Coupez and de Halleux (1983:175).

9 In a footnote Schoenbrun (1993a:5) expresses his suspicions of "any classificatory decisions based solely on lexicostatistical study". However, other factors may confuse historical with linguistic processes.

10 Disproving of genealogical language classification Drobin (1991:82) appears to see the development of language as a continuous flow whereby glossary retained by random historical selection seems to live on independently of its speakers, adopting itself to new environments. Ehret (1998:24-25) has explained how a living, spoken language is always submitted to change over time and space, but not without its speakers. Greenberg (1966:2) classified African languages and had no doubts about the validity of the assumptions behind the genetic model: "When resemblances can be assembled which are recurrent in many languages, which extend over vast and widely separated geographical areas and which encompass elements with morphological functions, pronouns, and the most stable parts of the vocabulary (most stable on *a priori* grounds and on the basis of our knowledge of areas with written records), then common origin is the only adequate explanatory hypothesis".

11 Personal communication from Prof. Roland Oliver, Frilsham, Thatcham near Newbury, 18/8 1995. Cf. his critique of "proto-language as a theoretical concept" in "Reflections on the British Institute's expeditions to the Southern Sudan 1977-1981" (1982b:167).

12 For further views on "this vexed question" see Schoenbrun's references in his article "We are what we eat: ancient agriculture between the Great Lakes", *JAH*, 34, 1993a:6, footnote 24.

13 Batibo (2003:191) introduces Schoenbrun's work under review accordingly: "This monograph is a compendium of cultural vocabulary from across Bantu-speaking Africa, with the main focus on the cultural vocabulary of the Great Lakes region. It is intended to serve as a repository of the historical knowledge and practice of the speakers of the various languages of the Great Lakes region as reflected in the reconstructed vocabulary. The monograph was originally assembled to support the book *A Green Place, A Good Place: A Social History of the Great Lakes Region, Earlier*

times to the 15th Century published by the same author. Hence this vocabulary should be seen largely as resulting from the conceptual plan of the above publication." The "conceptual plan" of the author unavoidably influenced the very selection of the cultural vocabulary presented.

14 The writings of Ehret and Schoenbrun may appear theoretical and difficult to understand nevertheless they offer a very interesting foundation for a critical application of their results.

15 This proposition is arguable (see Ehret 1998:8, note 7).

16 Today there are speakers of languages thought to be members of the Khoisan language family living to the southeast around Lake Eyasi in Mbulu district, Tanzania, the Hadza and Sandawe (Schoenbrun 1990:10).

17 *Madi* is a generic name for a group of peoples, comprising the population in the (then) West Nile District of Central Sudanic extraction. It is the name these people use about themselves and it is generally recognised (Crazzolara 1961:141).

18 Sutton, in a volume dealing with East African History (*Zamani*), edited by Ogot (1968/1973:82-83), has drawn up a chart showing the peoples of East Africa and their linguistic affiliation. This overview was of importance for his presentation of "The Settlement of East Africa", (1968/1973:70-97). He clarifies the mentioned Nilotic groups and subgroups, placing them under the African language family of the *CHARI-**NILE***, following Greenberg's (1966:85) classification.

19 P.c. by David Schoenbrun, Kampala, 18/12 1996.

20 Schoenbrun (1990:284-285) here refers to the important research by Robertshaw and Collett (1983:292) and Collett and Robertshaw (1983:121). There is also an "excellent revision of 'kansyore' by decorative motif, facies and chronology" (Schoenbrun 1990:736) in Collett, D.P. and Robertshaw, P.T. (1980), "Early Iron Age and Kansyore Pottery finds from Gogo Falls, South Nyanza", *Azania*, 15:133-145.

21 Greenberg (1966:1) states that there are three fundamental criteria underlying his genetic classification of the languages of Africa. The first basic principle in this respect is the importance of involving *both sound and meaning* when comparing specific resembling forms.

22 This problem was pointed out to me by Ehret himself in a personal communication in Bayreuth, 3/9 1989, in connection to the 4th Nilo-Saharan Colloquium.

23 This point was stressed during my discussions with Prof. Hakem, Department of Archaeology, University of Khartoum, March 1986. See also Hakem 1981:309.

24 Here Ehret (1998:145, endnote 5) follows Lienhardt 1961 "and others".

25 Schoenbrun (1990:281) mentions several authors here, for example Sutton 1966, 1971, 1968/1973 and Ambrose 1982.

26 Guthrie's (1967-1971) conclusions about Bantu migrations can be discarded. His assertions about Bantu origin were wrong; his constructed forms and his analysis of sound change are useful when used with caution (comment by M. McMaster, November 2001). He placed the nucleus of the Bantu-speakers' languages somewhere in the Zambezi-Congo watershed, subsequently spreading towards the north-north east into the Great Lakes region. When Katoke wrote his monograph on Karagwe, Guthrie's theory about Bantu migrations still seemed more plausible to him than Greenberg's (Katoke 1975:11). Prof. Katoke refers to Guthrie's paper in *JAH* III, "Some Developments in the Prehistory of the Bantu Languages", 1962:280-282.

27 Acknowledgements to M. McMaster for clarifying this point p.c. in Uppsala, November 2001.

28 I am very much grateful to Mary A. McMaster, who shared her research methods and results during our longstanding interactions, face to face and electronically, from October 1992 in Bukoba, May 1997 in Bomoseen, Vermont and in Uppsala October-November 2001.

5
Environment, Clans and Beliefs

Interlacustrine kingship understood from within requires a thorough investigation into the contextual framework of family, lineage and clan. This chapter seeks to expose the underlying mechanisms for the formation of clans and religious structures among the interlacustrine peoples under investigation. Hultkrantz' religio-ecological perspective offers a method for uncovering the interrelationships between the social structure and religious form. The investigation of religious form and social structure undertaken on a synchronic level produces analytical tools whose function and symbolic content enables the researcher to propose solutions to historical problems. From within the context of the material itself the methodological foundation for the present work is laid out.

The RUTARA-speaking Peoples' Clan System

The clan, *ruganda,* in Rutara speech communities generally is a patrilinear, in most cases exogamous descent group, united by common group symbols of avoidance and sometimes friendship. These symbols, termed primary and secondary totems, are documented for Buhaya and Karagwe (Cory and Hartnoll 1945), the Banyoro and the Batooro (Buchanan 1974) and the Banyankore (Karugire 1971). Cory and Hartnoll's, although from the colonial perspective, *Customary Law of the Haya Tribe* (1945) contains a wealth of information on the Karagwe and Buhaya clans. An appendix notes totems, founder, place of origin, court duties and clan spirit for each one of the 122 clans listed. Nowhere else in the literature is such material systematised and available for comparative studies of the wider region. Katoke's *The Karagwe Kingdom* (1975) also has appendices with notes on clans that are valuable to the regional perspective. Father Samson's extensive ethnographic notes on the people in the then Bukoba district (including Karagwe) highlight common traits in the clan structure of the Rutara-speaking peoples. He concurred, except on a few details, that Gorju's (1920) conclusions

on "the family life" of the Banyoro and the Banyankore held true for Bukoba and Karagwe.[29]

Carole Buchanan's (1974) systematic historical research on the clans of "the Kitara complex", covered most of the present Bunyoro (Masindi and Hoima districts) and Tooro (Kabarole district) kingdoms and neighbouring portions of Mbarara, Mubende and Luwero districts (Buchanan 1974:6, cf. Ogot, 1984:500). The kingdom of Tooro is an offshoot of Bunyoro that was separated in the first half of the nineteenth century, while Mubende and Luweru districts now belong to Buganda. Buchanan (1974:2) considers Kitara to be the mother-state of the Banyoro and the Batooro. She argues that Kitara was unique:

> The pivotal role Kitara played in the interlacustrine region is apparent to any student of pre-colonial political centralization, kingship, ideology, and the broad pattern of social, economic and religious organization of Bantu-speaking Uganda (Buchanan 1974:5-6).

The present study will demonstrate that those influences have even been more far-reaching, extending beyond the boundaries of present Uganda to include many other centralised polities in the region, but are late.

Buchanan (1974:14) has gone deepest in the field of clan-based historical research (Schoenbrun 1990:256) interviewing over 230 elders and covering the broader social contexts of Kitara clan histories. She maintains that there are fewer than 100 clans in "the Kitara complex" today (1974:12). Roscoe's (1923a:14-18) list gives 115 clans, 24 of which Buchanan (1974:15) found to be non-existent. Therefore Beattie's (1957b:317) calculation of 150 Banyoro clans would be excessive. Buchanan concluded that clan members perceived themselves in kinship terms regarding themselves as brothers and sisters, "however remote ... the genealogical link may be" (Buchanan 1974:12). Karugire (1971:79), writing from his Munyankore perspective, points out that "the theoretical foundation of the whole clan system [...] is that members of the same clan originate from the same distant ancestor", even if "in practice this is not necessarily so". Consequently, they would follow a rule of exogamy. Marriage within the clan would be regarded as incest and against normative behaviour. Not long ago, in Kagango village in the Bushenyi

district (south western Uganda) a family had married within their own clan and that was, and still is, regarded as strange and out of place for good behaviour.[30]

So there is a deep feeling of common identity among clan members expressed in kinship terms, even if today many of the interlacustrine clans are split up and dispersed over large areas of the region. The present Rutara-speaking people's clans do not usually form corporate or territorial units. The clan should be regarded as a reference category of identification rather than a family group.[31] As will be shown below, the operative social unit remains the sub-clan or lineage.

Buchanan's evidence confirms that the Kitara clans are not to be seen as merely extended families, because they are not centralised at the corporate level. She had to admit that the sources available to her from the context of "the Kitara complex" could not establish clear links joining all lineages within a clan to a single founder or ancestor. Her evidence suggests that "at least some Kitara clans have more precise genealogical links than the amorphous and fictionally bound 'clans' of neighbouring Rwanda and Nkore to the south". However, she found only two Kitara clans that could trace their origins to a single founder by name. One of them is the *Bagabo* clan, whose ancestor was remembered as *Hangi* (Buchanan 1974:11), a name that the Rutara-speaking people would associate with *Ruhanga*, i.e. God, the Creator. Her extensive research material reveals that the roots of Kitara clans may reflect original migration units:

> Such a pattern would involve several heads of families, not necessarily blood-kin, travelling together, settling together and commemorating their common heritage by coalescing as clans after arriving and remaining in Kitara. New settlers maintained closer relations as 'family', whether blood-kin or no. The stereotyped stories of 'brothers' travelling together is compatible with this view, which seems borne out by the evidence collected for this study (Buchanan 1974:11-12).

Accordingly, as the Kitara clans (*ruganda*, pl. *enganda*) dispersed they would maintain their link with the original migration unit through the common name. Crazzolara (1961:138) has observed that clan names are the most permanent heritable expressions both among the

Luo-speaking peoples and the Bantu-speakers. "The persistence of the attachment to a particular clan name" was the characteristic of Kitara clan tradition that Buchanan (1974:12) exploited in her historical reconstruction. She gives the example of the *Bagabo* and the *Basiita* clans as two of the oldest clans in "the Kitara complex". As will be shown in the course of this study, the *Bagabo* in Bunyoro traditions termed pioneers, *Abatembuzi*, appear to have roots in the remote past, predating the *Basiita*. According to my sources *Basiita* actors can have exerted influence during a considerable range of time, not only taking part in the more recent developments of regional expansion activities staged by the Banyoro.

The *Basiita* clan name deserves special attention, because, as we shall see, it has been retained and spread over many parts of the whole interlacustrine Bantu-speaking region. The view of Cory and Hartnoll about the origin of the clan organisation in Buhaya and Karagwe conforms to the one of Buchanan for Bunyoro. They also contend that the clan system is to be derived from migratory groups, who after they had settled formed clan units (Cory and Hartnoll 1945:255). The *Basiita* appear to have been one of many clans that had been dispersed and settled in Buhaya and Karagwe, where sources support a considerable influx of clans claiming their origin to lie in Bunyoro (Cory and Hartnoll 1945:255 and Cory 1949:95). Clan histories from Bukerebe (Ukerewe), the south-eastern-most outpost of Rutara-speaking peoples, also document clan migration on a large scale from Bunyoro (Hartwig 1971:99). Such traditions of clan movements in the past are crucial, because they explain the close relationship between present languages like Runyoro and Luhaya, the speakers of which live geographically far from each other (cf. Cory 1949:95).[32] To demonstrate that Bunyoro in the past was a regional power *Omucwa* Ausi Rwakaikara asserted that Runyoro is still widely understood:

> When you are in Bunyoro you talk Runyoro. You go to Tooro, you speak Runyoro, except you change the tone. When you go to Ankole, that is broken Runyoro. When you go to Kisoro in Kabale, still you don't need an interpreter. When you are in Karagwe, there you are in Bunyoro. The Bahaya also speak broken Runyoro. The whole of this region can speak Runyoro.[33]

The selection of Rutara as a collective name for all the languages with near affinities to the Runyoro of today highlights the eventual importance of *Kitara*.[34] The evidence brought forth for this study will demonstrate that the term *Kitara* applies to more recent events than has previously been assumed.

At the time of compilation, 1945, Cory and Hartnoll noted that some of the Bahaya clans claiming origin in Bunyoro still considered ancestors in Bunyoro to be their clan heads, *abakuru* or *abagurusi b'oruganda*.[35] The connection with the parent unit would be recognised through the original ancestor; the first settlers of those Banyoro clans in Buhaya would be seen as heads of subclans, *mahiga*, of parent clans in Bunyoro. The word *mahiga* means 'hearthstones'. Whatever the reason for the dispersal, the originator of the splinter group had settled in another place, where he built his new house and hearthstone (Cory and Hartnoll 1945:256 and Cory 1949:95, 97).

From the perspective of Rutara-speaking peoples, the groups of interlacustrine migrants who came to settle the land and tame their environment were the original clans or "brothers (and sisters) travelling together" (Buchanan 1974:12). The original reason behind the choice of specific totems is lost in history, only mnemonic devises accounting for the choice remain. Many clans still recount this etymological devise.

Cory and Hartnoll note with surprise that although every clan has its totem in Buhaya (and Karagwe) and there are many clans, there is a comparatively small number of different totems. The elders were consulted on the problem. They suggested that some of the Kihaya clans were probably sub-branches, who had split from their original clan unit in Bunyoro. When they separated, the new unit took another name, usually the name of their leader, but had to retain the original totem. Thus there is a local belief in Buhaya and Karagwe that all clans with the same totem were once the same clan, even if they have different names (Cory and Hartnoll 1945:257). The same observation has been reported from Bukerebe:

> ... although the totems frequently remained unaltered, the name of the unit could be altered from time to time, usually when a portion of the clan moved to a new location (Hartwig, 1970:8).

Buchanan (1974:53) also concluded that shared totems constitute evidence of links between clans. One important informant from Tooro told her that "people with the same totem were at one time the same clan". For "the Kitara complex" Buchanan uses the term "primary totem" to mean the original totem, while "secondary totem" was the additional, different one, that could sometimes be acquired by a Kitara lineage.

Cory and Hartnoll (1945:257) assert that the Buhaya and Karagwe clans holding the same primary totem often hold different secondary totems:

> The elders explain this by saying that an *omugurusi* often adopted a secondary totem on account of certain events on his journey or in his life. For example, the *omugurusi* of the basimba clan is Mauwe. On the day of his birth a dog had puppies. The dog often washed the child by licking it. Mauwe later, out of gratitude, ordered his descendants to consider the dog as their friend, and the dog became the secondary totem of the clan.

The "secondary totem" of Cory and Hartnoll is rendered in Luhaya as *murumuna waitu* or 'our brother' by a source from the White Father's Mission,[36] which confirms the view of the former authors that "the use of the secondary totem is becoming obsolete". It was claimed that many people had difficulties in remembering their secondary totems, while everybody knew their primary (Cory and Hartnoll 1945:257, note 1). Roscoe (1923a:14) also wrote that due to the slight importance the Banyoro in general attach to their secondary totem, it had not been possible to secure so much information about the clans as would have been desirable. However, Rev. Dr Sebastian K. Lutahoire, who had done research among his fellow Banyambo of Karagwe, explained the function of the secondary totem of his own clan. For security reason, thunder, *enkuba*, had to be the secondary totem and "brother" of the *Balisa* clan, because they were herders. So they needed protection for themselves and their cattle when they took them for grazing.[37]

When asking about the totem of a Munyambo you would say *Noziraki*? 'What do you avoid?' The noun for 'avoidance', *omuziro*,[38] translated by those foreign to the culture as "totem", derives from the verb *okuzira* above. The White Fathers of Bukoba translated

it as "taboo",[39] a word that seems more appropriate than the term "primary totem" used by Cory and Hartnoll (1945), because it refers to a prohibition traditionally known and respected by clan members (cf. Bjerke 1981:63 for the Bazinza). "Taboo" would better fit the concept of prohibition inherent to *omuziro*, but the term "totem" will be employed in this study because of convenience. It has been used by most researchers dealing with the interlacustrine clan system in general to designate a group symbol of clan identification (Buchanan 1974) or a "sign of differentiating between clans" (J. Kibira 1974:22). Clan totems together with clan names form part of the collective naming system of these peoples, as stated by Buchanan (1974:53) for "the Kitara complex". Below the interlacustrine concept of "totem" will be placed in its wider context.

Among the Banyankore and the Bakiga (inhabitants of the former Kigezi district, now comprising Kabale, Kisoro and Rukungiri and Kanungu districts) the notion of totems as identifying factors is systematised. The Banyankore use two criteria to connect their four main clans with their respective sub-clans, namely; their belief in the same ancestor and their observance of the same totem. To differentiate between subclans they add another totem. Karugire gives the example of the *Bashambo* clan that has over fifty subclans all sharing the common totem of *epa* (a woman with underdeveloped breasts) and each sub-clan having a second specific totem. According to Karugire, in Kinyankore terminology the "primary totem" is used to mean the totem shared by all subclans of the same clan, while "secondary totem" stands for only those totems that are peculiar to specific subclans (Karugire 1971:72, note 96).

A Muhima elder from Nyabushozi, Mbarara, said that the Runyankore term for secondary totem is *mwenewaabo*, 'their brother'. This perception can be linked to the concept of brotherhood and protection recorded for Karagwe and Buhaya. For example, the primary totem or avoidance object, *omuziro*, of the Bahinda is *enkyende*, 'monkey', while their secondary totem or *mwenewaabo*, 'their brother', is *entuha*, 'crested crane'.[40] The latter is one of the few totems with inherent significance that can still be decoded.

Another translation of secondary totem is *Beene wa ishebo*, which literally means 'the sons or descendants of their fathers', a term that refers to a category of sub-clans. Prof. Mushanga (1970:30) claims that the *Beene wa ishebo* secondary totem terminology designates the totems of *Bahima* sub-clans exclusively, because the *Bairu* do not refer themselves as belonging to any sub-clan of the *Beene* so and so sub-clan category. In a list of Banyankore clans compiled by a Munyankore informant[41] only certain sub-clan names had the *Beene* plus name appellation, as in the case of the *Beene Biraaro* subclan of the *Abagahe* clan. Accordingly, the *Beene Biraaro* sub-clan or the descendants of *Biraaro* would be *Bahima* only, observing their specific secondary totems (cf. Mushanga 1970:30). Those specific totems may have been the secondary totems Karugire (1971:72, note 96) defined as "only those totems that are peculiar to specific sub-clans". More research needs to be done to explain why the mentioned sub-clan category allegedly referring exclusively to *Bahima* has a name that deviates from other subclan terminology. As we will see later, in all other cases the social composition of interlacustrine clans is mixed.

Roscoe's (1923a:14-18) assertion that Banyoro clans were divided according to classes, pastoralists, freemen and serfs has been disproved. Buchanan's (1974:15) evidence shows that the Kitara clans were mixed in terms of their socio-economic status by the 19th century and also "as far back as oral tradition can project", reiterating Beattie's (1957b:319) conclusion. In Karagwe, Ahakishaka village, there were instances showing that clan membership crossed language boundaries as well as socio-economic strata.[42] As will be shown in the course of the study the socio-economic mixture of interlacustrine clans derives from historical developments, not merely from social factors (contra Willis 1997[43]).

Rukiga-speaking people (present inhabitants of Kabale, Kisoro and Rukungiri districts) have a division of clan groups like that of the Banyankore, united by the same totem and the same ancestor. However, there are 10 such clan groups of varying sizes listed (Ngologoza 1969:5-6), and then each clan in the group is divided into a number of subclans, *emiryango*, which are the local or territorial units. Each clan group shares a special joking relationship, *bukumbi* (Baitwababo 1972:3). Every such

clan group, *mucumbi*, remembers the name of their common ancestor,[44] who here is an old woman, *omukaikuru*. On special occasions the women of these clan groups would solemnly declare the name of their ancestral mother; they swear either by the old woman or by their totem in order to be identified by clan. The men would swear by their wealth.[45]

Nowhere else in the interlacustrine region have I found ancestral mothers. But in other Rutara speech communities a woman's clan affiliation could be identified by a so-called motto, which she would proclaim or swear by when asked for it. For example, an *Omuzigaba* in Karagwe as well as Buzinza would immediately say "*Mubali gwa Kabaijo*", a motto denoting the name of the country where their clan originated (Betbeder 1971:739). The Banyankore gave special female titles to all the daughters of certain big clans (Bamunoba 1973:29-30 and Mushanga 1970:31). The clan mothers and mottos are probably relicts of the original Bantu bilateral descent for which Ehret argues persuasively (1998:149-155).

The present overview of the Rutara-speaking people's clan system has demonstrated that as clan brothers and sisters migrated they formed new groups and lineages in their new settlements. When Rutara-speaking people's clans split or absorbed new comers, terminology for these sub-groups emerged. This terminology became systematised around group-symbols or totems and names of the founders. This pattern is evident in the former districts of Ankole and Kigezi. However, in Bunyoro and Tooro it is hard to find an indigenous word with the equivalent meaning of "sub-clan", although there were lineages.[46] Kahimbaara (1974:8), though, mentions the term *ekitabu* for 'clan subgroup'.

Interlacustrine Clans in Relation to Settlement Patterns

In Bunyoro, the people would say that "in former times each *mugongo*, ridge, was occupied by a separate clan" (Beattie 1971:12), suggesting that organised agnatic lineages, *enganda* (pl. of *ruganda*), would be dominant on particular *migongo* (pl. of *mugongo*) (Beattie 1957b:323). As was demonstrated from the Buhaya context, the ridge allowed access to a series of ecotones. Previous exposition has shown that the Karagwe environment differs from Buhaya. Yet Katoke asserts that

up to the time when he wrote his book there were still some villages in Karagwe that were known to have been originally inhabited by one clan, *ruganda*, except for their wives whom they took from other clans, according to the rule of exogamy. The clan connection recalls the names of the villages. Among the five mentioned clan villages there were *Bugara bw(a)'Abasiita* and *Kayanga k(a)'Abaheta. Bwa* and *ka* indicating the possessive preposition 'of', which means that the named villages belonged to the mentioned clans (Katoke 1975:14). *Ka* and *bu* are used alternatively as locative prefixes in Bantu languages.[47] Bugara, the clan village or place of the *Basiita* in Karagwe, is on the ridge-top overlooking the Kagera valley, as the river meanders eastwards towards Lake *Lweru* (Victoria).

The possessive preposition *ka* in the place name *Kayanga ka Baheta* indicates that Kayanga belonged to the clan of the *Baheta*. Furthermore, the *ka* denotes that Kayanga was the place of the *Baheta* clan. The nuclear unit of the clan, the family, is here the *e-ka*, which is translated as 'home' or 'family'. This refers to the Rutara-speaking peoples.[48] A noun, *e-ka*, is used as a collective word for all the family members, and also for the place in which they live, their home or homestead. So the phoneme *ka*, used as a possessive preposition in Karagwe (Rutara), also forms the root of nouns denoting the basic settlement unit, namely the homestead of a family.

In Luganda and Lusoga, *ka* forms the root of their term for clan. While Rutara-speakers share ruganda for 'clan', the North Nyanza Bantu-speakers of Busoga and Buganda would use the word *eki-ka*. Fallers (1965:64) reports that each of the Busoga clans takes the name of its founder. In Busoga there are today over 230 clans. Buchanan (1974:12) ascribes the proliferation of clans to an observed tendency to adopt new names when clans separate and migrate to a different area. Such a pattern is evident for the Basoga, although their patri-clan is never a localised unit of members belonging to the same clan (Fallers 1965:65). The Luganda word for clan is also *eki-ka*. The present 52 recognised Baganda clans are neither identified with their original settlement lands or with their founders. They are kept together by their totems to the extent that the names of the clans are the same as their symbolic representations or totems.

The same root, *ka*, reoccurs in the Luo-speaking Acholi people's term for 'clan', *kaka*, given by the Muganda elder M.B. Nsimbi (1964:25). Bere (1955), in his article on "Land and chieftainship among the Acholi" clarified the nature of the Acholi *kaka*. It appears that the Acholi *kaka* is a larger unit than the clans investigated among Bantu-speakers. The *kaka* is comprised of many "unrelated communities or individual strangers to the blood, together called the *Lobong*", all brought together by the "aristocratic" lineage or *Kal* of their "chief", the *Rwot*[49] (Bere 1955:50, cf. Crazzolara 1950:98). The *Gang Kal* is also the term for the palace of the *Rwot*, i.e. his place of settlement,[50] which was the centre of the *kaka*. Bere (1955:50) defined the *kaka* as the unit of the *Rwot* but thinks there has never been any social differentiation between "aristocratic" and "commoner" communities that formed the subgroups of the *kaka*. There were some thirty such independent *Rwodi* in Acholi. Those were the ones that p'Bitek (1970:12) insisted the colonialists had lumped together as the Acholi "tribe".

Words meaning sub-clan in the Great Lakes Bantu successor languages derive from 'door of the house' or 'doorway', implying that you walk out of the door of the house to go and enter another door when settling in a new place. The Runyankore/Rukiga subclan *omuryango* means 'doorway, sitting-room' (Taylor 1959:115). Naming rituals recorded for the Banyambo reflect this symbolism. When a baby girl is named, she is seated in the centre of the living room (*omulyangwe* in Luhaya) facing the open door, because she will depart later from the clan of her parents, in order to bear children for her husband and his clan. A boy, on the other hand, faces the inside courtyard, indicating that he belongs to his family and clan for life (Lutahoire 1974:37).[51]

Ehret (1998:150-151) has demonstrated that the doorway metaphor, widely applied to terms for lineage in the interlacustrine region and beyond, originated among Bantu-speakers. It is most often expressed by proto-Bantu **-liango*. There is evidence to show that the Luo-speakers share with Bantu-speakers the doorway metaphor inherent to the concept of lineage. The Pajule clan elder, Mr Olanya, said the

translation of their word for sub-clan or lineage, *kika*, is exactly 'door'.[52] *Kika* sounds familiar–it seems to be the Luo version of the Luganda, *ekika*, which means 'clan'. In a recent article, "Frontier Linguistics in Uganda", Wrigley (2001) has highlighted "the widespread semantic sharing between the whole cluster of Nilotic and Interlacustrine Bantu peoples" that Southall (1971:392) had deemed to be far more profound and widespread than had ever been recognised. Drawing from the rich lexical material presented by Wright (1940b), Wrigley (2001:575) deduces that the common vocabulary found in Acholi and Runyoro must derive from borrowed vocabulary. The number and the character of the loans imply sustained and intimate contacts across the Luo/Bantu borderlands.[53] The door metaphor re-occurs in naming rituals recorded for the Puranga clan, Acholi. Naming rituals among the concerned Luo-speakers reflect the idea of the girl leaving her clan by making her face the open door, while a boy would be facing the inside courtyard, just as we have seen for the Banyambo.[54] So it may not be farfetched to propose that *kika*, 'lineage, door', could be a Bantu loanword in Western Nilotic.[55]

Table 2. Overview of words for clan and subclan (lineage) mentioned in the text

GREAT LAKES BANTU Successor Language Groups*	Languages or dialects	Clan	Subclan
NORTH NYANZA	Luganda	*ekika*	*esiga* (hearthstone) *omutuba* (barkcloth tree) *olunyiriri* (line) (*olujja*)
	Lusoga	*ekika*	(*nda*)
RUTARA	Runyoro	*ruganda*	*ekitabu*
	Rutooro	*ruganda*	*ekitabu*
	Runyankore	*ruganda*	*omuryango* (door)
	Rukiga	*ruganda*	*omuryango* (door)
	Luhaya	*ruganda*	*eihiga* (hearthstone)
	Runyambo	*ruganda*	*eihiga* (hearthstone)
	Kikerebe	*ruganda*	
	Kizinza	*ruganda*	*kitako*
WEST HIGHLANDS	Ikinyarwanda	*ubwooko*	*umuryaango* (door) *inzu*
	Ikirundi	*umuryango*	*umuryango* (door)
(* Cf. Schoenbrun, 1990) (NILO-SAHARAN) WESTERN NILOTIC or RIVER-LAKE NILOTIC **			
LUO (** Ehret, 1982:27)	Acholi	*kaka*	*kika* (door)

Ronald Atkinson (1976), who worked with Webster and Onyango Odongo, claims that the weight of their collected evidence argues for a profound Kinyoro socio-political impact on western Acholi from about 1680 (1976:267).[56] Wright's (1940b:200) list of Acholi and Runyoro shared vocabulary includes the word for 'clan', the Acholi

kaka and the Runyoro *kika*. As has been shown, the sources generally give *ruganda* for the Runyoro 'clan' (see Schoenbrun 1997:78).[57] Davis' (1938/1952) dictionary, which Wright (1940b) reviewed, has *kika* in Runyoro, although it is the word for clan in Luganda. Perhaps *kika* found its way to Acholi via Bunyoro from Buganda. The occurrence of the Luganda loan word *kika* in Acholi argues for contacts with a rising regional Kiganda state power. In a synthesis on regional historical developments in the Great Lakes Region 1500-1800, it is stated that "by 1800 Buganda had conclusively established her pre-eminence over Bunyoro".[58]

The West Highlands group of the Great Lakes Bantu successor languages, Kinyarwanda (Maquet 1961:33 and Hertefelt 1971:3) and Kirundi (Meyer 1916:132-133), have *umuryango*, and in Kiha *umulyango* (Mbwiliza 1979:104), all subclan. More research is needed about the clan system in Burundi and Buha to reveal the exact social context of the word there. For Rwanda, however, it seems clear, in view of the wider interlacustrine clan framework that *umuryaango* connotes subclan or a lineage, which is the corporate group on the local level. The Kinyarwanda equivalent for the Rutara clan category, *ruganda*, is *ubwooko*. In Rwanda there is also the minor lineage, which is called *inzu* (Newbury 1980:392 and Hertefelt 1971:3). So it appears that the Banyarwanda have two levels of subclans. A similar kind of fragmentation of subclans is to be found in the Luganda terminology.

The main sub-divisions of the Baganda clans were *amasiga* 'hearth-stones' (Nsimbi 1964:26), those of the Bahaya, *amahiga* (Cory and Hartnoll 1945:256). The Baganda and the Bahaya who speak languages of the two branches of the intermediate West Nyanza living in similar environments near the lake, conceptualise sub-clan the same way. The ancestors of the Baganda and Bahaya appear to have separated and then renewed contacts, a history facilitated by water transport.[59] The *amasiga* in Buganda were divided into *emituba* (pl. of *omutuba*), which in turn split into different *ennyiriri* 'lines' (Nsimbi 1964:26). There are another two sub-sub-clan names in Buganda, but the ones that have been mentioned will be enough for the purpose of the present

study.[60] The name of the second level is the word for the barkcloth tree, the *omutuba*. No doubt, as will be shown below, it symbolises the corporate function of the subclan to come together under the *omutuba* tree for religious and other gatherings (cf. Matovu 1995:147). Consequently, the Baganda society was traditionally divided into at least four sections on the subclan level, while the Banyarwanda had two such sections. Such fragmentation of corporate groups could relate to population density, as Fallers (1965:65) has suggested for the Basoga. The correlation between rainfall and population may be key. Both Rwanda and Buganda are situated in areas of good precipitation, an important factor in population growth, settlement patterns and subsequent expansion. Karagwe, on the other hand, lies in the rain-shadow of the Buhaya ridges and is sparsely populated, which could be why some Karagwe villages are remembered to have been populated by members of a single clan, *ruganda*.

Clan-based Beliefs and Symbolism Among Rutara and North Nyanza Speakers

Internal evidence (cf. Diagne 1979:181) demonstrates that the interlacustrine clan system is closely connected to migration and settlement. From the perspective of an African theologian from Buhaya, reflecting on his own culture the clan is "a social grouping comprising a number of households the heads of which claim descent from a common ancestor". The genesis of the group, he writes, must touch upon the existential question of life and creation, "since blood is involved" (J. Kibira 1974:18). Then Carole Buchanan concluded from her extensive material on the Kitara clan histories that the genesis of the clan groups was to be derived from the context of migration and settlement. Vansina, writing as a historian with a wide experience of African traditions, asserts that traditions about migrations and settlement should be understood as cosmologies, as "creation *in situ*" (1985:22).

Migration groups in all probability were the groups who became the original clans. They had come to tame their environment and settle on the land. This study will present evidence that in later oral traditions the

process of settlement in a new place became retrospectively a new creation. The founding fathers, or in the case of southwestern Uganda, mothers, became the common ancestor for each clan, although the members were not necessarily, even in the beginning, related by blood. What matters is the belief in a common ancestor. That belief created a sense of group security, a sense of belonging that provided spiritual and social support for clan members (cf. Osogo 1970).

Ties to the spirits of the first ancestors, *emizimu*,[61] 'spirits of the dead', found symbolic expression in *emiziro,* 'avoidance objects', symbols that united the various clans. *Emiziro* were a legacy from the ancestors. They left no impressive structures or material remains, but bequeathed symbols of group identification, symbols that were nurtured by succeeding generations and served as emblems of security and solidarity. The legacy of the ancestors, the *omuziro*, had to be respected because a violation of the stipulated prohibition would result in immediate supernatural sanctions. The object to be avoided by a specific clan was treated differently in the various societies, but sometimes it was neither to be touched nor eaten by clan members, as in the case for the Bazinza (Bjerke 1981:63-64). Transgression of the taboo would cause a skin decease, sickness believed to have been contracted as a result of a breach of a taboo.[62] The proper measure to remedy the situation would be to offer gifts to ancestral spirits and ask for forgiveness. Therefore, the totemism of the interlacustrine peoples did not resemble the one practised by the Nuer or the Dinka, who saw their clan totems as representations of spirits and spirits in general (p'Bitek 1971:90 and Bjerke 1981:65).[63]

The totemism of the people belonging to the Great Lakes Bantu successor communities can be seen as part of the collective system of identification, in the sense that clan members categorise themselves in accordance with the totems they commonly respect. Buchanan (1974:53, note 30) asserts for the Bakitara that their totemism does not seem to have any precise religious base. Bjerke (1981:65) also holds that the totemism of the Bazinza would definitely be marginal to the religious system. However, it appears that the totemism in this region did have important religious connotations. Not in the explicit sense that anybody

would pray to a spirit believed to be inherent to any totem or symbolic representation for the clan. But still the totems were traditionally held in great respect because of their connection to the ancestors. Ancestors would however never be worshipped.

Evidence from throughout the region refutes any suggestion of ancestor worship.[64] Rev. Dr Niwagila's Bahaya informants all agree that "they are honoured, not worshipped"(1991:46). His catholic colleague, Method Kilaini, discusses this question eloquently:

> Among the Bahaya every chief, head of clan or father of the family had religious authority. Obedience to them was not only civil but also religious. One who offended them gravely, not only had to be pardoned by them, but he also had to offer an expiatory sacrifice to the ancestors because the living and the dead formed one unique body. The living elder offered prayers and sacrifice, in communion with the dead, and in the name of the living, who were under his care. When these elders died they continued with the same duties and demanded the same obedience. Just as one was bound to take gifts to the living chief, head of the clan or his father, in the same way he offered him food when he was dead. The ancestors were believed to eat the essence of the food and leave the outside intact (Kilaini 1990:34).[65]

Baganda elders, who enjoy authority and respect here on earth, continue to be venerated after death (Mawanda 1974:1).[66]

Totemic beliefs and ancestor veneration of the interlacustrine peoples represent in Hultkrantz' terms the formalisation of religion from within the clan community. As Kilaini (above) said, that community embraces "the living and the dead" moulded together in "a unique body". The ancestors on all levels of society, it may be the state, clan or family, are deeply involved in the affairs of the living members (cf. John Mbiti 1969:87).[67] The active ancestral participation in interlacustrine community life is one of the most important features, if not the most important, of these people's religion. The meaningful social and religious base of interlacustrine people is the clan, not the tribe.[68] J. Kibira described how the clan religion of the ancestors came to be known as the religion at the "Stem of the tree", *ansibu yomuti,* or at the "Soil of the earth", *obutaka-nsi,* by the Christian converts in Buhaya (1974:37). Within the context of the clan solidarity,

the ever-present ancestors inspired clan members to respect stipulated ethical guidelines (cf. Rugyema for Kigezi 1983:18). Thus, to break the taboos was a sin against the clan, "the living and the dead".

Therefore, the totemic beliefs of the interlacustrine peoples cannot be said to be marginal to their religious system. Instead, these beliefs must be interpreted as inherent to the "formalization of religion, its passage from intuitive personal knowledge to a symbol and a concept for communication" (Hultkrantz 1981-1982:6). It follows that the totems are communication symbols. They serve as labels of clan affiliation, an identity that gave the individual security in life and into the future. At the same time totems, *emiziro*, were reminders of the ancestors, *emizimu*. As will be demonstrated, the ancestors were links to the Creator. So totems can be perceived as symbols of communication, both socially and spiritually. They are formal pillars in the clan religion and at the same time they serve as social symbols of the clans.

Among Bantu-speaking peoples of East Africa, the original place where the founder of a group had settled became important religious centres to succeeding generations.[69] Information from Karagwe will illustrate how the Banyambo practised the religion "at the foot of the stem of a tree". The first settlers were believed to have planted a tree, around which succeeding generations of clan members would gather in reverence to their first ancestor, regarded as their "paternal patriarch or spiritual leader":

> They would 'give him food' at the occasion of every new moon, when cows and goats would be slaughtered for the sacrificial meal shared at the big tree, which functioned as a clan shrine. Then prayers of thanksgiving and intercessions for peace in the family, clan and country would be held and everybody in the family must be mentioned, absent members being represented by a stone. This was also the occasion when wrong-doers would be expelled or repented and penalized.[70]

In Kyamutwara the *omukuru w'oluganda*, clan head, had ritual functions as the clan's high priest. In this capacity "it was his duty to communicate with the ... *omushambwa gw'oluganda*, he offered sacrifices and prayers and kept the religious shrines and trees on behalf of the whole clan" (Kaijage 1971:547).

In Kiziba the village shrine tree was the *kigabiro*. It was kept in the care of the priest, who also blessed the soil.[71] For Rusubi (Buzinza, Biharamulo), the senior agnate, the clan elder or *mukuru w'oruganda*, was responsible for the veneration of the *musambwa*, the clan spirit, and the shrine, *kigabiro*. The latter was common to all members of the kinship based local group or subclan (Bjerke 1981:66). The *misambwa* manifested themselves in wild animals like snakes, leopards, lions, hippopotamus and crocodiles (Bjerke 1981:69). In Buganda not only the spirit but also the shrine itself could be perceived as *omusambwa*, "a sacred place thought to be the abode of spirits" (Gorju 1920:258-259 and Apolo Kaggwa 1934:123-124). Donohue (1997:100) elaborates on this context:

> The animals who lived in these sacred places, especially lion, leopard and python, were regarded as sacred, and even as incarnations of the resident spirit.

Omusambwa is identified with the sacred place where it dwells, which is also called *omusambwa*. Hence *omusambwa* is the term for the clan spirit, its incarnation as well as its abode or sacred place. The East African scholar Gwassa (1972:209) has demonstrated that the model identifying "symbol with the object symbolized" is the way "Bantu symbolism" works, as indeed symbolism generally.[72] The complex reality behind the concept of the "Bantu" has emerged from linguistic research; Bantu-speakers is now accepted usage. In spite of that reservation, this author has made a very important point. As we shall see from within the framework of interlacustrine peoples' culture, the medium and the spirit are symbolically identified. The present case exemplifies that the incarnation, the lion, leopard or python, and the resident spirits are called by the same term, *omusambwa*.

It is important to bear in mind that the *emisambwa* were not worshipped as such, they were merely regarded as communication media with the "supernatural power", as Mwamula-Lubandi (1978:135) writes for the Basoga. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter it would not be correct to call them gods. Although an English translation reflecting on Western concepts, the word *spirit* seems to be closer to the perception of the concerned peoples themselves about their clan

emisambwa. Protection appears to be one of the important aspects of the *emisambwa*. The Basoga had protective clan *emisambwa*, which were said to guard the graves of their homesteads (Mwamula-Lubandi 1978:135). Furthermore, one informant from Bukoba (Kianja) said that the *omushambwa*, who in the shape of a leopard would appear at the time of the new moon, was the guardian of her *Abayango* clan.[73]

To sum up, the *emisambwa / emishambwa* can be described as clan or lineage spirits in terms found in Buzinza, Buhaya, Buganda and Busoga but not in Karagwe, Ankole, Kigezi, Bunyoro or Tooro, nor among West Highland speakers. Therefore, the *omusambwa* clan spirit area appears to be confined to the territories around the shores of Lake Victoria, among populations presently speaking North Nyanza and Rutara languages. A knowledgeable Muganda elder, Mzee E.N.K. Kizito clarified the problem of *emisambwa* clan spirits. The *emisambwa* to the Baganda are human beings born in a different way:

> Somebody can give birth to a human being, who can change into an animal. It is there in the world in some parts and some people take it as very important. There are those who are born with one eye, one ear, one breast, for example. River Mayanja is said to have been produced by a woman. River Ssesibwa is also produced by a woman. This is all because of God. It is seen as a sign of the Creator, *Katonda*.[74]

In Karagwe this belief in human beings having been born looking different takes the form of *emigani,* 'stories, things that are told'. In the view of de Heusch (1966:209) these traditions fall under the heading of "stories or fables". *Emigani* from Karagwe illustrate the nature of these fables: "The woman who gave birth to a chair", "The girl who was transformed into a lion" and "The thunder and the lion". The last tells of a man who had two wives. One of them gave birth to thunder the other one bore him a lion.[75] In the wider African perspective it could be argued that the first *omugani* reflects "gender concepts of divinity" or creativity in general.[76] Given the multi-level character of African traditions such an interpretation is plausible. But a comparison between the nature of the Baganda *emisambwa* and perceptions about their primary totem, *omuziro*, suggests those stories can be understood

within the particular framework of interlacustrine clan beliefs, a system derived from the environment. This is how Mzee Kisitu explained why members of the *Njovu*, 'Elephant' clan are prohibited to eat elephant:

> Kibaya Sessanga had a wife, they produced Kikomeko, a son, then Nagguja. The third one was an elephant. That is why the father said that his descendants should not eat elephant, because they should not eat *their brother* (my italics).

The father is Sessanga, a name given to male members of the Elephant clan (cf. Nsimbi 1950:212-214). Their totem, *omuziro*, the elephant, is explained in terms of kinship. Their ancestor, Kibaya Sessanga, is understood in symbolic terms to have fathered somebody, who was born different, the elephant. That elephant becomes the brother of all the descendants, who subsequently cannot eat their symbolic brother, but according to the Muganda elder, they are allowed to touch him. The elephant became the symbol of group identification and totem of the Elephant clan. Among the Baganda, the brotherhood concept is contained in the symbolism of their main, primary totem, *omuziro*,[77] while the secondary totem, *akabiro* is associated with their perception of the placenta of the first ancestor.[78] The concept of *akabiro* and its associations is so important for the understanding of interlacustrine kingship symbolism that it merits a special section below.

As was shown from the investigation of the Buhaya and Karagwe clan system, it was their secondary totem that was perceived as a friendly thing altogether. In Karagwe the *Balisa* clan, who were said to be herders adopted thunder as a secondary totem to protect them from lightning. The secondary totem of the Banyambo and the Bahaya, *murumuna waitu*, 'our brother', and the Banyankore, *mwenewabo*, 'their brother', in the wider interlacustrine context is analogous to the Baganda explanation of their primary totem as symbolic clan brother. The symbolism of friendliness and brotherhood behind the notion of primary totem among the Baganda and secondary totem among the Bahaya, the Banyambo and the Banyankore may be connected. There are clear similarities to the *omusambwa* clan spirit belief, with protective

functions, as we have described for Buzinza, Buhaya, Buganda and Busoga. But oral traditions recorded in Karagwe, where there is no mention of *omusambwa*, confirm the belief in human beings having been born differently.

The integration of human beings and their environment is manifested and translated into terminology of kinship. Therefore, the beliefs in human beings being born different, as expressed in the concept of *omusambwa* clearly shows that man/woman comprehends himself/herself as part of the natural environment surrounding him/her.

Life Itself in Family, Lineage and Clan Beliefs: The Placenta and Twin Births

There are family events in interlacustrine households that are believed to affect the life of the whole clan, calling for special spiritual guidance and protection. One such occasion is the birth of twins that is regarded as a blessing of fertility at the same time being susceptive of dangers, which have to be averted by rituals (Kyewalyanga 1976:33). Among the Baganda the *akabiro* secondary totem, perceived as the placenta of the first ancestor, is symbolically related to interlacustrine customs and beliefs pertaining to twin births. According to Lucy Mair (1934:42) the Baganda sometimes spoke about the after-birth as a twin. It is important to explain the perceptual background of such beliefs, because kingship traditions and symbolism between the lakes must be understood and interpreted from within. The context of family, lineage and clan is the obvious base. As we shall see, kingship traditions originating in Bunyoro elaborate on the symbolic theme of twins. In these respects Luo-speaking peoples share some ritual traits with the Banyoro. Beliefs surrounding the placenta are specifically elaborated on clan level among the Baganda. My source from Karagwe will serve as one example of the close relationship between the Banyoro and other Rutara-speaking peoples.

The significance of the *akabiro* secondary totem of the Baganda and its identification with the placenta, *ekitanyi* (Kyewalyanga 1976:28), is now examined from the perspective of a Muganda elder consulted on the problem. Mzee E.N.K. Kizito explains:

> *Akabiro* is most important for the Baganda, because it is the one who feeds you when you are inside your mother's womb. It is like a mother. In the womb of your mother there are two children, the child and its placenta. They are using only one mouth inside and that mouth is the umbilical cord. At birth it is immediately cut and tied. This means the end of the duty of the second child, the placenta. He[79] did a good job, for nine months feeding the baby. The placenta is the second child, which is not crying. It is immediately buried by a woman. It is put in a divided banana stem, which is not dry. The stem is cut length-wise in halves and the placenta is inserted in the middle. Then the halves are tied together. This is the "grave" of the placenta, because it is not supposed to be buried in soil. If so, it can affect the living baby so that it dies quickly. The placenta, then, is buried at the foot of the banana plant at the spot where the mother gave birth, among the other cut stems and the grass that covers the soil. But it must be buried by a woman.

The Muganda elder continued by stressing the connection between the *omuziro*, the primary totem and the *akabiro* secondary totem. The two always go together. The *omuziro* represents the living child, the first ancestor, while the *akabiro* is the second child, the placenta of the first ancestor. Like a mother the *akabiro* feeds the *omuziro*. Furthermore, the Baganda identify the concept of the placenta with their perception of *lubuga*, a clan sister who is appointed heir to a deceased woman. But by extension everybody, men as well as women, has a *lubuga*, because every person comes with a placenta.[80]

The symbolic role interlacustrine peoples attach to the placenta concerns the very identity of a human being. In the words of *Omukama* E. Rukamba in Kyamutwara: "you would never legalise a child unless the placenta is seen".[81] Quoting Junod (1962:38) Lutahoire (1974) brings up the traditional belief among Bantu-speaking peoples that a person's home is where his placenta is buried. That is where he[82] must be buried too. It is generally buried deep behind the house, on the spot where the birth has taken place, "but some prefer to bury it inside the house fearing that dogs might unearth it, which is taboo" (1974:29). Traditionally, the Banyoro are among those who bury the placenta inside the house. Nyakatura (1970:9) has it that the placenta was first placed on a potsherd and left on the *biko* leaves of the *omuko* tree (Uganda

coral), which formed the mat where the delivery had taken place. The following morning it was buried near the doorway of the house, in the case of a boy on the right side, if a girl on the left. For the Central Luo p'Bitek (1971:93) documented the custom to bury the placenta within the area of their ancestral shrine, the *abila*.

A belief that it can affect fertility appears to be the underlying motive behind the careful ritual attention devoted to the placenta attested for a wide range of African peoples. Among the Banyankore there is evidence to show that special ritual treatment of the placenta, *ekinyiina*,[83] is believed to work as a birth control method. James Ntozi (1993:137) notes that if a family has decided their number of children is enough, the following measure can be taken:

> After delivery the firstborn takes the placenta of the lastborn to an anthill. The placenta is then inverted and a big stone is placed on it. It is said to stop further conception.[84]

This piece of information from the Kinyankore family context can serve as an interlacustrine example to show the function of ritual reversals. The life-giving placenta is turned upside down and then serves the opposite purpose, which is to prevent life. Axel-Ivar Berglund (1976, Chapter X), in his study on Zulu-speaking people's symbolism, highlights the mechanism of reversals he observed when documenting customs pertaining to rites of passage and funerals.

Plate 3. Ritual reversal: the drum turned upside down during the mourning period of the Omukama Patrick Kaboyo of Tooro, August 1995

Among the interlacustrine peoples the symbolism of the inverted placenta on family level can be ritually applied to the wider context of clan and kingdom. When the king, head of the clan or any important man had passed on, life and every reproductive function is at a standstill.[85] In Tooro, among other kingdoms, the most powerful and potent symbol of kingship, the royal drum, as indeed all other drums and spears, are turned upside down and are not turned upright until a successor is installed (see picture).[86] The analogy to the placenta is evident. The Baganda articulate the symbolic importance they attach to the placenta by identifying it with their secondary totem, *akabiro*, perceived as a mother to the living child. It is understood as a twin who has brought life to the child in his/her mother's womb. It cannot be buried in soil lest the living child dies quickly. Neither can any king be buried in direct contact with soil.[87] The symbolic significance of this custom can be sought from within the context of life itself. If the role of the king in the deepest sense is to promote life and fertility, just as the placenta, he cannot be buried in soil. If he does, his subjects would die quickly.

Our attention now turns to the ambiguous attitude towards the phenomenon of twins. For Central Luo-speaking peoples p'Bitek (1971:93) touched upon aspects of ritual attention necessary in case of twin death. The remains of twins might be found in a two-mouthed pot half buried in the ground, placed near the *abila*, 'shrine'. During my fieldwork in Kitgum District, Opete village, I observed two pots conspicuously placed in the middle of a courtyard topped by an arrangement of twigs as a kind of structure. My Luo research co-ordinator, Mr Olanya Eugenio, explained that this was a shrine, *kang*, for twins. The remains of twins who die early have to be excavated from the grave, the bones being deposited in pots arranged to serve as a family shrine.[88] For the Lwo-speaking Alur J.J. Ngomlokojo (1985:92) has documented that certain spirits of ancestors were believed to be hostile and therefore held in fear. Spirits of those born abnormally, for example twins, had to be particularly placated lest they bring misfortune on the living members of the clan. The twin, *kang* in Opete, served to facilitate the ritual relationship needed to protect the family from such potentially dangerous influence.

The birth of twins, *barongo* (Runyambo, Luhaya and Runyoro) is followed by special precautions. Over thirty years ago, in Karagwe, Mwalimu Gabriel Kasenene explained that this is because twin births are regarded as being abnormal:

> The traditional midwife must refrain from sexual intercourse until the twins are allowed to get out of the house. Boys usually stay indoors the first four days after delivery, girls only three. In the morning when the *barongo* are taken outside the first time a feast is prepared for close family members and nursing attendants. One week afterwards relatives and friends are received to see the children but they are not allowed to hold them until they have given each of them a gift of for example 5 or 10 cents. But only the trustworthiest family friends are allowed to see and hold the children. Twins are liable to greater dangers than other children are, so the parents must be particularly careful. There is a belief that anybody can kill the *barongo*.
>
> Twins are treated exactly alike. They are fed at the same time and if one of them has misbehaved also the other one is punished. If one of the twins die, the mourners do not wail as for other children. Wailing (kuchura) is believed to affect the living child so that it may die.

Just as the Muganda elder elaborated on the belief that if the placenta is buried in the soil, the living child can die quickly, the Banyambo conceptualise a mutual dependence between twins extending the boundaries between life and death. Furthermore, semantic evidence shows that twins are not spoken about in the same terms that usually apply to human beings.

Mwalimu G. Kasenene elaborates:

> When one of the twins dies the Banyambo do not say *eirongo yafa*, 'the twin has died' as for ordinary people. Instead they say *eirongo lyaguruka.*

Nyakatura (1970:16) documented for Bunyoro that if either or both twins were born dead or died soon after birth, special vocabulary was required. In such a case the Banyoro also had to employ the verb *kuguruka*, 'to jump or fly away',[89] not the normal verb *kufa*, 'to die'. The Kinyambo instance specifies the perception of abnormality by demonstrating that the semantics when referring to one twin, *eirongo*, involves a grammatical form that does not apply to human beings, *ly-* in *lyaguruka* instead of the usual *y-* for the "man"-class.[90] The form *ei-rongo*, 'the twin', belongs to the *eli-* class, the first singular of the *ma*-class (Rascher 1958:31), *ly-* follows as pronominal concord. Under the *ma*-class generally fall nouns that "mostly denote things, which do not occur singly, but rather as an accumulated mass" as for example stones, mountains, houses etc. (1958:30). In accordance with Luhaya grammatical rules the plural of *ei-rongo* should be *ma-rongo*, not *ba-rongo*. The */a/ba*-prefix always refers to human beings (Rascher 1958:11). A possible reason for that anomaly will be proposed below. The underlying significance expressed by placing *eirongo* in the *eli*-class, the plural of which generally expresses things that do not occur singly, is that twins belong together and should not be separated.

Mwalimu G. Kasenene, Karagwe:

> When one of the twins has died and been buried, any piece of wood is selected and prepared as its substitute. By uttering the words 'this is your brother/sister' a relative places the substitute by the side of the living twin. When the child is fed the symbolic twin is also fed and the two are washed together. This is done because of the perception that twins cannot live without one another. If one dies, the remaining one is left suffering.

> If the remaining twin would also die, he/she is buried together with the substitute of the one who died first. No wailing is allowed because you can never mourn a twin the way you weep for ordinary dead. It came as it went. It was born abnormally and therefore no normal death wail occurs when it dies.[91]

For the Kinyoro context Nyakatura (1970:16-17) explains that the birth of twins traditionally affected the whole naming system in the family. As a sign of the twins' special status they were always given special names. If both were boys the one born first was called *Isingoma*, compounded of *ise*, 'father' and *ngoma*, 'drum', the second *Kato*, 'the little one'. For girls the first one was *Nyangoma*, 'mother' or 'possessor of the drum' the second *Nyakato*, the prefix *nya-* is used to form names of women (Nyakatura 1970:17, note 15) or denote ownership (cf. Rascher 1958:69 for Luhaya). The child born after the twins was *Kiiza* whether it was either a boy or girl. Parents of twins would thenceforth be called *Isabarongo* and *Nyinabarongo*. Purification rituals had to be performed with the purpose of bringing to an end the ritual dangers of twin births. The rituals must take place outside the village. The twins, *abarongo*, as well as their father, *Isabarongo*, and their mother, *Nyinabarongo* are all of them dressed in two pieces of new bark cloth. As a sign of their distinguished status they are carried back after the ritual. The husband is taken to the home while the clan people of the wife carry her to their campsite outside the homestead. As *Nyinabarongo* she now enjoys her position. She is given gifts and adorned with beads and many other things (Nyakatura 1970:15-16). The Banyoro share family-naming patterns linked to twin births with other Rutara-speakers.[92] Such terminology can also be attested for Luganda-speakers of North Nyanza (Kyewalyanga 1976:35).

According to my sources, however, among Rutara-speakers, the Banyoro, the Batooro, the Banyambo and the Bahaya, currently use the term *barongo*. The stem, *rongo/longo,* transcends the present language communities of Great Lakes Bantu speakers and is common to the mentioned Rutara-speakers and the North Nyanza.[93] In contrast, the

current term for twins in Runyankore/Rukiga is *amahasha*, singular: *empasha* (Taylor 1959:194), a usage that includes Kinyarwanda. A Runyankore-speaking knowledgeable elder[94] said that *barongo* is a Luganda word, currently used by Rutara speech communities. Most probably the Banyoro term was formerly *amahasa*, because in Nyakatura's (1970:16) translation 'the ritual danger of twin birth' is exactly *amahasa*. The Runyankore word for twins, plural of the *ama-* class, *ama-hasha* and the Runyoro 'ritual danger of twin birth', *amahasa*, conform to the singular *eli-*class. If we can establish that *barongo* is a Luganda loanword in the afore-mentioned Rutara-speaking language communities, the grammatical anomaly employing the *ba-* prefix instead of *ma-* would be explained.[95]

I suspect the spread of the root *-longo* could have been the result of late political influences emanating from Buganda. The plural form *barongo* in Runyoro, Luhaya and Runyambo could be an applied form of the Luganda term for twins: *balongo* (Snoxall 1967:180). We have seen that the Kiganda concept of secondary totem, *akabiro*, is symbolically related to the conceptual complex of twin births. The Baganda have extended their family and clan beliefs related to placenta/twin symbolism to state level. According to Kiganda traditional custom, when a son has been appointed heir to his father's household he is installed together with a *lubuga* 'clan sister',[96] allegedly "because all human beings come with a placenta" (above). But the same title also refers to the office of the king's sister, *Lubuga*, whom, I was told, represents the female aspects of kingship. Motherhood is the key, because like a mother, the *akabiro* feeds the *omuziro*. The Kinyankore word for placenta, *ekinyiina* is explicit. It can be translated as 'the big mother'. But the Kiganda greater elaboration of *Lubuga* would reinforce the conclusion that *barongo* is a Kiganda loanword among Rutara-speakers (cf. Sapir 1916:23).

Concluding Remarks

The present chapter has shown that Bantu-speaking peoples' clan system between the Lakes constitute dynamic social formations shaped over time and space in close interaction with the physical environment. The

environment also gave form to religious beliefs, which arose within the context of the clan system.

The weight of the evidence presented in this chapter demonstrates that the clan system of Rutara-speaking peoples is derived from migration groups, who after they had settled formed clan units. In theory members of the same clan perceive themselves originating from the same distant ancestor. Even if they are not related by blood, not even in the beginning, according to the rule of exogamy, members of the same clan do not marry. But clans should not be regarded as extended family units, because they are not centralised at the corporate level. Clans are reference categories identified by name. As they dispersed they could still be identified by a common name, sometimes distributed over large areas. If clan members parted from the group and chose another name, they could nevertheless be identified by a common group symbol or totem, a symbol that is held in respect because of its connection to the ancestors. Clan membership is believed to continue beyond death. Ancestors, may they have been kings, clan or family heads, are not worshipped but honoured in a similar way as they had been held in respect during life. They are believed to actively participate in the lives of the members of society. This close communication between the living and the dead is based on the "religious vision of the world", a vision that presupposes frequent and continuing interaction between the visible and the invisible spheres of life.

Totems can be regarded as symbols of communication both socially and spiritually. Two types of totems could be identified. The primary totem is the *omuziro*, which is a symbol that is commonly avoided by clan members. The underlying symbolic significance of the secondary totem is protection or brotherhood. This definition holds for Rutara-speaking peoples in general. Evidence from the North Nyanza Luganda-speakers shows that they identify themselves by the names of their primary totems in which the symbolic representation of brotherhood is contained. To these people the secondary totem, the *akabiro*, has symbolic connotations inherent to the concept of the placenta/twinship

and motherhood. The Baganda elaborate this symbolism on kingship level. Their title *lubuga*, applied to clan and royal sister alike, is proof.

Kinyankore beliefs in the contraceptive powers of the inverted placenta compared to mourning rituals, when the kingship drum is turned upside-down argue for an undercurrent symbolic significance of fertility and motherhood applied to the kingship drum. Moreover, the placenta and the body of the king are treated in the same way. Neither of them could be buried in soil. Overlapping present Rutara and North Nyanza speech communities, the distribution of the symbolic trait of fertility employed in rituals pertaining to the placenta, the king's body and the kingship drum alike are all interesting features which suggest the existence of a kingship drum during the intermediate West Nyanza period, before the former groups started to split up more than 1500 years ago. In his historical reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu cultural vocabulary Schoenbrun (1997) maintains that the proto-language of *-*goma*, 'drum', 'authority', is Bantu, but its exact etymology within the region is unknown. The concept of the drum in relation to authority can be found among all the three language groups of concern for the present study: Rutara, North Nyanza and West Highlands (1997:124).

There are other cultural traits indicating the fundamental importance of motherhood. Clan-related terms and customs accounted for among southwestern Rutara-speakers (Bakiga, Banyankore, Banyambo and Bazinza) demonstrate remains of a bilateral descent pattern that Ehret has shown originated from Bantu-speakers.

When clan units split or absorbed newcomers, terminology for these sub-groups emerged. Among the Banyankore and the Bakiga that terminology became systematised around group-symbols or totems and names of founders. Terminology for certain subclans among the Banyankore suggests that their members are only *Bahima*. Usually, however, clan membership crosses socio-economic strata, at present and in the past. So the historical reasons for the mentioned divergent Kinyankore subclan terminology remain to be looked for.

Observable terminology for subclan corresponds to settlement pattern. The more centralised nationalities like Buganda display

multiple levels of subclans, populations supported by favourable ecological circumstances. This exposition has shown that the phoneme *ka* denotes the root of the basic settlement unit of the homestead among Rutara-speakers. Schoenbrun (1997:89) gives evidence to support that **-ka*, 'household' is extant in Rutara and North Nyanza.

Historical linguistic research results demonstrate the antiquity of this root, which is ultimately derived from the Proto Nilo-Saharan **-ka* for 'cattle camp'. Then **-ka* has been reconstructed as a Sog Eastern Sahelian loanword in Proto Great Lakes Bantu meaning 'homestead' and 'head of cattle' (Schoenbrun 1996:29). The Proto-Great Lakes Bantu speech community was already in existence around 500 BC (Schoenbrun 1990:151). Some 600 years later, in Proto West Nyanza, the meaning of **-ka* narrowed to 'household', as 'head of cattle' was replaced by another Sog Eastern Sahelian loanword, **-te* (Schoenbrun 1993a:30-31). Hence in Kinyarwanda the word for cow is still *in-ka*. During the period when they spoke the same language, West Nyanza, Rutarans and North Nyanza-speakers borrowed the root for cow from Nilo-Saharan Eastern Sahelians, which became *en-te*. Subsequently, the period after around 500 AD saw the process of divergence and spread of the speech communities, which would become Rutara and North Nyanza. That is when **-ka* took on the meaning of 'clan', basically in North Nyanza.

On account of the evidence presented I propose that the term *kika* found in Western Nilotic is a North Nyanza loanword derived from **-ka*, 'clan'. Etymologically a Nilo-Saharan root associated with cattle, the North Nyanza **-ka* in the Western Nilotic *kika* in Acholi adopts the meaning of 'subclan', 'lineage' or 'door'. The Western Nilotic application of the originally Bantu door metaphor inherent to social formations of subclan or lineage, employed for *kika* in Acholi, argues for its North Nyanza source. This conclusion does not only confirm scholary observations that wide-spread semantic sharing is characteristic of the Luo-Bantu borderland culture in Bunyoro. It will also be important to bear it in mind, when evaluating the origin of kingship traditions told in Acholi.

Furthermore, we have seen that customs and beliefs surrounding the concept of twinship are widely distributed among speakers of Great Lakes Bantu successor languages as well as Western Nilotic Luo-speakers. If Rutara-speakers borrowed the word for twins, *balongo*, from North Nyanza-speaking communities, it has to have occurred during the last centuries of contacts with Buganda state power, which by 1800 had surpassed Bunyoro. But more research is needed to establish the ultimate origin of this cultural trait. For the purpose of the present book, however, it has been necessary to elucidate interlacustrine beliefs and perceptions inherent to the concept of twinship. This is because a thorough understanding of the social implications of twinship in the Great Lakes region will be helpful in the effort to interprete kingship traditions formulated in Bunyoro.

To sum up, the present chapter has shown that it is possible to discern common traits that are shared by the various clan groups in the study. Historical linguistic research results can demonstrate that clan migrations and linguistic group movements are interrelated. Thus we have learnt that the phoneme *ka*, traceable through time, is the carrier of shared symbolic associations to cattle keeping, in current interlacustrine terminology expressed in settlement units of family, sub-clan and clan. The word *ka* reflects the intimate relationships between a cow and human beings, which stem from the ancient history of the African past.[97] The ultimate source of the semantic field of settlement in relation to cattle appears to be Nilo-Saharan. West Highland speakers kept *in-ka*, while Rutarans and North Nyanza-speakers adopted the Eastern Sahelian root **-te* for 'head of cattle' during the intermediate West Nyanza period, dating between roughly 100 and 500 AD. Based on symbolism of fertility and motherhood internal evidence taken up in this chapter has indicated that kingship could have existed as early as that time. Kingship is longstanding in the region, perhaps even of greater age than available evidence for clan-formation. Explored in the following chapter the symbolic clan representation of *entuha*, 'crowned crane', and its clan associations will shed further light on the problem. It will be demonstrated that the symbolic contents inherent

28 Contra Crazzolara (1950), Atkinson stressed that before 1680 there is no evidence to prove, in relation to their Madi and other neighbours, any unique features attributable to the population groups that later became Acholi.

29 Schoenbrun (1996:29) writes that the only Rutara speech community, which uses the term *kika* for 'clan' is the Banyankore. According to my sources, as for other Rutara-speakers, *ruganda* is the common word in Runyankore.

30 "The Great Lakes region, 1500-1800" by Webster, J.B., Ogot, B.A. and Chrétien, J.P. in ed. Ogot, B.A., *General History of Africa* V, UNESCO, 1992:801.

31 Comment by M. McMaster, November 2001.

32 Information in Kampala from Mzee E.K.N. Kisitu, (BFFN/8:94, 1995). I am indebted to Mr Ronnie Sessanga, the then Deputy Minister of Culture of the Buganda Lukiiko (Kingdom parliament), who coordinated the interview.

33 *Omu-zimu*, plural: *emi-zimu*, 'ancestral spirit', is derived from the Proto-Bantu root, Guthrie's CS 617, **dím-*, 'to extinguish', 'to become extinguished' (Vansina 1990:297). In Schoenbrun's (1997:182-183) cultural vocabulary the distribution of the term *-zimu* covers the three Great Lakes Bantu successor language communities of concern for this book. According to Schoenbrun the meaning of the term has been narrowed down primarily to refer to homestead spirits, who are dangerous. That is probably not because the term is derived from a stem, whose original meaning refers to extinction, as Schoenbrun (1997:182) concludes. I would rather agree to Vansina's (1990) view that extinction here equals 'to fall into oblivion'. That notion would be correct about "spirits of long-deceased persons" (1990:297). It is correct that *-zimu* has become a term specifically used about malevolent homestead spirits, but the reasons for that development may be sought from the impact of historical processes rather than from the intrinsic meaning of its etymology. It is my impression that *-zimu* can be a term broadly applied to spirits of long-departed ancestors (*Omukama* E. Rukamba, BFFN/2:49) but also, in a more specific sense, to malevolent or "mischievous" homestead spirits. Adding the aspect of "mischief", Lodhi shared that view (p.c. 3/5 2007, Department of Linguistics and Philology, Uppsala).

34 The story about the skin decease contracted on breaking a taboo is generally told in the region, even among the Central Luo (p'Bitek 1971:90-91). See for example Bjerke (1981:63-64) for the Bazinza.

35 According to the critical analysis of the use of "totem" in traditional anthropological writings by Levi-Strauss (1962/1991:18-19), the supposed institution of "totemism" was erratic from the beginning. It resulted from the confusion between clan names, in which the names of animals correspond to collective appellations, and beliefs concerning guardian spirits, which are individual protectors. This was from the context of the Ojibwa society north of the Great Lakes of northern America, from whose language the word 'totem' was taken.

36 P. van Pelt (1971:53), in his examination of Bantu-speaking peoples' customs in Mainland Tanzania, asserts that "many agree that the term 'ancestor worship' is a highly misleading term".

37 Davis (1938/1952:271) translates *ekihongwa*, Runyoro, *empongano*, Runyankore/Rukiga as 'offering', a noun derived from the verb *kuhonga*, 'offer a sacrifice or offering to a deity, appease with a gift' (ibid:44). From his South African perspective of the Zulu Axel-Ivar Berglund stressed that the "offering" should rather be understood as a sharing of those gifts for the purpose of communication with the deceased members of the family (p.c. in Uppsala, 26/4 2007). The same root occurs in Kiswahili, *empongo*, 'offering', the basic meaning of which is simply 'to offer a gift generally', *-pongeza* (p.c. with Lodhi, 3/5 2007).

38 With material from the Suku of the then Zaire, Kopytoff (1971) shows how the ethnocentric connotations inherent to the very term "ancestor" have influenced the theory of "ancestor worship". He wants to replace "ancestor" with "elder". Brain (1973) agrees with the rejection of the term "ancestor worship". But he does not equate "ancestors" with "elders", because the

ancestors "have the edge over the living elders in that they are aware of what may be hidden from the latter" (1973:126). For a more conservative view, see Fortes, M. 1965/1972.

39 Mbiti (1969:25) calls the departed on family level who are still remembered by name the "the living-dead", a term stressing that they are really felt to be part of the family. Mbiti advocates for the validity of that term to be true for African peoples in general. Pettersson's (1953) sources made him wrongly conclude that ancestors were gods, who were worshipped among the South Eastern Bantu, and among Bantu-speakers generally. Still he correctly emphasised the close relationship between the living and the departed. "The dead member of the tribe lives in the memory of the living members of the tribe in an evident and real way, and so he becomes an active power, interfering in what happens among them" (1953:100).

40 "Tribal religion" (cf. Hultkrantz 1979:224) is not a relevant label here, because the concept of tribe has no meaning for any historical interpretation.

41 See for example Kimambo and Omari, "The Development of Religious Thought and Centres among the Pare" (north-eastern Tanzania), 1972:114.

42 Information from Prof. Sebastian K. Lutahoire, Oct. 1986 in Dar-es-Salaam, about his clan the *Balisa*, in Masheshe village, Karagwe. Gasyoire is their clan patriarch. In Cory and Hartnoll's appendix (1945, Appendix V:17) on Bukoba and Karagwe clans his name is Gushweire and he is listed under the heading 'clan spirit', *Mizuka*.

43 Information from Prof. M.M. Mulokozi, Institute of Kiswahili Research, Dar-es-Salaam, 13/10 1992.

44 Comment by Prof. Jan Bergman, Uppsala 1998.

45 Information on the flight from Mwanza to Dar-es-Salaam 2/9 1979 from Ms Erika Timotheo This information was confirmed in Kampala 11/5 1995 by the Bukoba fieldwork findings of Cecilia Pennacini at that time, Ph.D.-student in Anthropology, University of Turin, Italy.

46 Buganda: Information given by Mzee Kizito, BFFN/8:99, 1995.

47 Karagwe: The first *omugani* was told by Ma Victoria Kakuru, 28/3 1976, the second by Ma Araikiliza Kaffrinkana, 19/3 1976, The third one was told around the same time in Ahakishaka by the *Embandwa* 'priest' Ma Konstancia Kyabona.

48 Comment in Uppsala (March 2000) from Dr Umar H.D. Danfulani, Department of Religious Studies, University of Jos, Nigeria.

49 In Roscoe's (1911:138-140) clan list the Baganda clans respect two totems, the main totem [by which they identify themselves] and a "second" one. All these symbols of identification are derived from the physical environment.

50 Buganda: Mzee E.N.K. Kisitu, BFFN/8:95-98, 1995.

51 The interpreter used "he", but obviously female aspects are inherent to the concept of the placenta.

52 Buganda: Mzee E.K.N. Kisitu, BFFN/8:95-98, 1995.

53 Kyamutwara: *Omukama* E. Rukamba, BFFM:169, 1991.

54 According to traditional custom a married woman belongs to her husband's clan. So she would not be buried where her own placenta was buried, but at her husband's homestead and place of his placenta.

55 *Ekinyiina* is the term for 'placenta' in Luhaya/Runyambo also (personal communication from Dr Adolphina Kateka, Stockholm, 17/5 2003).

56 Mrs B. Katana asserted that many Banyankore women still believe in the birth control effects of the inverted placenta (personal communication with Copenhagen 17/5 2003).

57 See for example Roscoe (1923a:122), who documented for Bunyoro that when the king died the chief bull in the king's herd had its scrotum tied to prevent it from mating. When the king in Nkore died, every fully-grown bull in the royal herd had its scrotum tied (Roscoe 1923b:51). From the context of Karagwe Lutahoire said (7/1 1988 in Dar-es-Salaam) that when the king, clan's headman or any important man died the cows were not allowed to be taken out for

grazing. Only after burial all tame animals were allowed to eat. The scrotum of he-goats and bulls had to be tied so that they did not mate. Men and women were supposed to sleep on the floor.

58 A member of the Tooro royal family was named *Kiijanangoma* because he was born when one king had succeeded his father, so "he came with the drum", i.e. when the drum had been turned upright again. For Bunyoro Rukya Batebe, the king's official sister, together with Mrs Ruth Bushara affirmed the same pattern (BFFM:1035A, 1994). Roscoe (1923b:51) maintained that the Kinyankore royal drums were covered at the passing of the king and were not seen again until the heir was appointed. Ruharo (1973:41) wrote that when the death of the king had been announced in Kayonza, the kingship drum *Nyakahoza* was turned upside down and was not turned upright until the coronation of the new king. The same pattern is reported for Unyanyembe, Tabora (*Mtemi* Fundikira, BFFM:514, 1992).

59 In Karagwe Ta Matayo Rwemburara told me that the old kings could not be buried in soil as ordinary mortals (Notes from Ahakishaka 1975:24). Father Pagès (1933:518) acsertained for Rwanda that "the king's corpse is completely isolated from any soil". For Bunyoro *Omubiitokati* M. Burara Arwoki said that no soil would be spread in the royal grave (BFFM:937, 1992). Neither would they cover the king's corpse with soil in Heru (Buha) (*Mwami* Theresa Ntare, BFFN/5:166, 1992). I witnessed the *okutabaza* royal burial rituals of *Omukama* Patrick Kaboyo of Tooro and took note of the fact that his coffin never came into contact with any soil (Karambi Tombs, 4/9 1995).

60 Acholi: Mr Olanya Eugenio, BFFN/7:104-105, 1993.

61 The Baganda use similar euphemism. When twins die they are said to have "flown away" (Mair 1934:52).

62 According to Anna Rascher's *Guide for learning the Ruhaya language* (1958:25) *lya-* is third person singular immediate past tense of the *eli*-class, the pronominal concord *y-* normally referring to human beings (1958:11).

63 Information given by Mwalimu Gabriel Kasenene including comments by Felista K. Elisa, Notes from Ahakishaka 1975:36-39. Felista asserted that she had witnessed the mentioned customs, which still existed, in her home village Nyakagoyagoye at the time of the interview.

64 According to my experience the custom of giving special names to twins, their parents and the children born after the twins is found in Karagwe and Buhaya. Mrs Betty Katana verified a similar naming pattern for the Banyankore (communication with Copenhagen 17/5 2003).

65 See *Luganda-English Dictionary* by R.A. Snoxall, 1967:180.

66 Personal communication from Runyankore-speaking Mrs Betty Katana, Copenhagen, 17/5 2003. She asserted that the Banyankore used to fear twins very much, especially if they were of different sexes.

67 Ehret (1987/1994:155) has observed that "grammatical ... elements probably cannot pass from language to language without an accompaniment of word borrowings".

68 For details on the Kiganda installation rituals of an heir, "always accompanied by a woman called *lubuga*", see Mair, 1934:212-216.

69 In the context of the Zulu people A.-I. Berglund (1976:110) interpreted a statement made by one of his informants accordingly: cattle and human beings live in the same way, because they stay within the homesteads, "which are the places of cattle and humans". I am grateful to A.-I. Berglund for drawing to my attention this very important observation, which points towards basic, shared cultural values transcending time and space in Africa.

6

God and Spirits, Clans and Kings in Beliefs and Traditions

To understand the early history in the region it is necessary to interpret it from within the framework of the interlacustrine clan-based belief system. A deeper understanding of interlacustrine history presupposes an understanding of the belief system expressed in terms coined by the peoples concerned, from within their reality. So religion or "spirituality" is the backbone of this history. Historical linguistics can help determine where in time those terms and names are rooted.

God and Spirits

The belief system in the Great Lakes region is now going to be investigated on three levels of reality. In the first section dealing with beliefs in God, the Creator, I will examine written and oral statements given mostly by knowledgeable elders consulted for Rutara-speaking peoples' communities, but a few representatives of West Highlands- and North Nyanza-speakers will complement the general picture. The following exposition departs from my Karagwe base and is also substantiated by sources from neighbouring southern nationalities. Here the intention is to demonstrate aspects of the interrelationships between the Creator and human beings through spiritual agencies. The third section entitled "Owners of the soil" has a broader scope that involves testimonies from all the three Great Lakes Bantu successor language groups as well as representatives of the Western Nilotic-speaking Pajule. A comparative examination of beliefs in royal spiritual manifestations will highlight possible origins of kingship symbolism that can be informative on the history of the region.

God the Creator

Sources from Buhaya, Buzinza, Buganda and Busoga, examined earlier, mention a category of clan spirits called *emishambwa/emisambwa*. According to Mzee Kisitu, a Muganda elder, they were regarded as

"human beings born in a different way", an explanation that was interpreted in the context of clan-related beliefs examined from the horizon of Karagwe. Such beliefs show that human beings see themselves as part of the natural environment. These spirits should not be called "nature spirits" as for example, Byaruhanga-Akiiki (1975:5) has done, because the term "nature spirits" would place them outside of human society. In fact, they were believed to be an integral part of the clan, of society and were in no way "nature spirits". In the view of Mzee Kisitu, the Baganda *emisambwa* manifested themselves as wild animals, which protected clan members and their burial sites. Neither should they be called "gods", who would be worshipped, because they were merely regarded as communication media with the "supernatural power" (Mwamula-Lubandi 1978:135). They were not gods, because they were created. Knowledgeable elders from Buhaya, Bugufi in Ngara, Bunyoro and Buganda agree on this point, which *Omukama* E. Rukamba of Kyamutwara summed up succinctly:

> Missionaries slipped a bit in describing the spirits as small gods; they are not, because they are created. We believe in one God, Nyamuhanga, who created the spirits. Kazoba, the spirit of the sun, is not God, because it was created by Nyamuhanga. Therefore, Kazoba is called Ka-nyamuhanga, which literally means 'of the creator'.[1]

Mzee Semuguruka from Ngara, an elder of the Bahangaza of Bugufi, (West Highlands) stated categorically that it was only *Imana* who was called *Lugira*, Almighty. All the other so-called "gods" were created as human beings and when they died, they became spirits.[2]

The Banyoro believe spirits reside in the hills. These spirits were not considered to be gods, because God, *Ruhanga*, created them. The heir to the hereditary line of priests to the Banyoro kings, the *Kibandwa wa Ngobya*, priest and medium of the spirit of the Ngobya hill, Venance Byaruhanga, explained this relationship between the Creator and the spirits as follows:

> It is God who created the hills and installed the spirits in them. The spirits are regarded to be powerful creatures. The creator is the master of everything on earth. But he went on creating spirits in different parts of the world to rule under him as his ministers. He ordered them to stay in the hills, caves, valleys, rivers and many different places. The spirits were given authority from God and they are regarded as his children. It is that authority, which they use to perform whatever they do.[3]

A source from north Kigezi explains that the sun, *izooba*, is more respected than anything else in creation and hence "he who created it must be the creator of all things". That is why they call him *Kazooba Nyamuhanga*, 'creator of the sun', where *Kazooba* and *Nyamuhanga* are colloquial names for *izooba*, 'sun' and for *Ruhanga*, 'Creator'. Therefore, he was the Supreme Being, the Creator of all things, and there was nothing that he did not create (Bakaitwako 1974:1). The name *Ruhanga* is composed of the prefix *ru-* used in relation to power and the verb *-hanga*, "to fix together different parts in order to make a complete whole", according to a source from southern Bunyoro (Balyebuga 1974:3). Thus the Banyoro explain the name of *Ruhanga*, the Creator and Supreme Being as "'the one who fixed heaven, earth, ridges and all that which is in them', *Niwe yahangire Iguru N'ensi, n'emigongo n'abyoona ebirumu*" (Balyebuga 1974:4). *Ruhanga* is father of his creation, moulder or maker who for his part is not created or made. Balyebuga also writes that female traits can be found in the above-mentioned name, in Bunyoro and Buhaya, *Nyamuhanga*, *Nya-* explained to be "a short form for mother". By the name *Nyamuhanga* the Creator can be perceived as the mother of creation who looks after it in the way a mother cares for her children (Balyebuga 1974:5); in Runyoro: *Kyozaire tonaga*, 'you do not throw away what you have given birth to'.[4]

The Bakiga have a name for God that in Hultkrantz' (cf. 1979:228) terminology sounds like a religious adaptation of their social system of clan mothers, *abakaikuru*: *Kahukaiguru*, which literally means 'the skin that covers the sky'.[5] The Bahaya conceptualise God's omnipresence *Rubambansi*, 'one who covers the whole land' (Kilaini 1990:30).

Along the lakeshores in Buhaya the fishermen praise God who sees everything by calling him 'the one who has eyes like a net-basket', *Amaishonkorugega–Katonda tarikwetaga kuhindura omutwe kuba nabona byona,* 'God does not need to turn his head because he sees everything' (cf. Kilaini 1990:29).[6]

Ruhanga as Creator structured the world and everything in it. His greatness was praised and expressed by many names, which were derived from what he could do (Rugyema 1983:3 for the Bakiga); in other words, "he is identified with all that he does" (Ataragaboine 1974:11 for the Batooro). Byaruhanga-Akiiki lists over one hundred names the Batooro/Banyoro have given him (1982:241-244). From the general African context Idowu (1973:150) explains that "the names by which Deity is called in Africa are descriptive of his character and emphatic of the fact that he is a reality". The names for the Creator are unexceptional. In African oral culture, "the proliferation of names ... signifies importance" (Aguessy 1979:115-116, cf. Byaruhanga-Akiiki 1975:7). Aguessy (1979:115-116) concludes that divinity in Africa "is not demonstrated but named". Wolor Topor (1990:3) shows that African languages vividly express "the singularity of the absolute Being". West African names given to God he enumerates have no plural and they never refer to any reality other than God. Against any misunderstanding derived from monopolistic Western philosophies Topor argues:

> The African acknowledges unequivocally the existence of one Supreme Being, namely God. It is a fallacy to classify African religion as polytheism.

John Roscoe (1923a:21), from the Banyoro context noted that although "the Bakitara had a great number of objects of worship, there was but one god, *Ruhanga*, the creator and father of mankind" ... concluding "their belief was entirely monotheistic".[7] I made the same observation in Karagwe (Farelius 1978:24). The Basoga say that *Ruhanga* set the tune[8] for the way things should be done in his creation, acting through his delegates and mediums. As a traditional medium of the *Kabaka* of Buganda, Ntambi za Mukama, 'The Light-giver of God', holds:

"Everything was created by one God, but different things were handled by different spirits and mediums".[9] Therefore, from within the context of the traditional belief system in the Great Lakes region, expressed in terminology meaningful to the speakers of the Great Lakes Bantu successor languages themselves, it is correct to speak of God the Creator, and of spirits, which are not gods or deities.

Scholars like Okot p'Bitek (1970) have provoked debate on the whole issue of God in Africa and whether the perception of the High God belonged to Western scholarship rather than African religions. Yet the overwhelming preponderance of evidence demonstrates the importance of the Creator in the interlacustrine region (cf. Kibicho 1990:44). Lutahoire (1974:72-73) quotes an old man in Karagwe, who had neither accepted Christianity nor the Islamic faith. He eloquently proclaimed his faith in God, his Creator, *Ruhanga*:

Wabumba omukuru	'the creator, maker (literally potter),
agambwa mbele, ntabuko	and the greatest who deserves mention
yamagara goona	first, the ground of all life'.

This old man knew that his source was with the Creator, who had created him in his clan as a link in the chain of ancestors, where he belonged in life as well as in the beyond (cf. J. Kibira 1974:21).

To a European observer this statement may seem reminiscent of Biblical expressions, suggesting that the belief in the Creator as potter derived from Christianity. Such egocentrism is contradicted by the facts; the conceptualisation of God as potter is deeply rooted in the region. Ishumi (1971:715) states that origin traditions in Kiziba, Buhaya, mention the name of *Kibumbi*, literally meaning "Potter". The Banyoro have *Kabumba* (Balyebuga 1974:5), while in Busoga (North Nyanza) one of the names for the Creator is *Kibumba*, 'potter'. A Musoga expert asserts that the concept of the Creator, *Lugaba*, 'giver', and the Creator perceived as potter, *Kibumba*, already existed when the first missionaries arrived in East Africa and that is why Christianity could take root so easily.[10]

God in Everyday Life: From Within a Karagwe Village

As late as in the 1970's ancient linguistic usage reflecting the traditional belief in the Creator could be heard in Karagwe. When she had escorted me to the end of her banana plantation Ma Kyabona, priest, *embandwa*, in Ahakishaka village used to bid me farewell with a prayer to the Creator: *Ruhanga ekukuume*, 'may God bless you and keep you well'. Ma Kyabona did not use *a-*, which is the pronominal concord 3rd person singular for the "Man-class" ('he, she, it'). According to the Luhaya Grammar by Rascher (1958:61) God belongs to this class. Nevertheless, Ma Kyabona, who was a faithful traditionalist, always said *Ruhanga e-ku-kuume*, rather than placing God in the same category as human beings. The question is whether Rascher reflects the Christian perspective, which personalises God and projects a patriarchal gender perspective that did not apply to the interlacustrine belief system before christianisation. In Rascher's lexicon God is *Katonda*, which is the Luganda word for the Creator, introduced to Luhaya through Christian missionaries. *Ruhanga e-kukuume* would have been the original form. *E-* is the pronominal concord, 3rd person singular of the noun class with living, non-humans. The implication is perhaps that God was not to be placed in the same category as human beings; the nature of the Creator was beyond human understanding and not to be classed with humanity. In the following I will use "he" within quotes about God.

Rugyema (1983:2) writes that to the Bakiga *Nyamuhanga* is beyond human understanding. Although "he" is considered as an immaterial thing without matter and therefore regarded as a wind or a gigantic shadow, that shadow assumes an anthropomorphic form. So "he walks, works, makes the child in its mother's womb and continues to support the universe in the totality of his creation". Césard (1937:16) recorded that the Bahaya believed their Creator to be "master of life and death" and "his" many names reoccur perpetually on their lips. In Kiziba (Sundkler 1980:53) Rev. Lutashobya's father, the clan priest, reiterated every morning their "Litany of Creation of the Clan". After each stanza of the prayer the kneeling clan and family members responded: "*Ramankya*". "Give us good life day after day". This invocation is

composed of two words: the verb *ku-ramya*, 'to greet the king'[11] and the noun *Nkya*, which is a name for the Creator in Bunyoro literally meaning 'luck, chance or fortune' (Balyebuga 1974:4). *Bwankya* means 'in the morning' in Luhaya and was the time when prayers to *Nkya* were recited. The old people in Ahakishaka village, Karagwe, would say that they had to pray to God *bwankya na bwaigoro*, 'in the morning and in the evening', implying not only prayers said in the Christian context, but also that of their own past.

However, in Kiziba the morning prayer in praise of the Creator was directed to the most important manifestation of "his" creation, namely *Kazoba*, the spirit of the sun:

> [...] Thou Sun, give blessing and space to our worship. *Ramankya*. [...] Give life, thou Sun, give space for our worship. *Ramankya*. [...] Give life, thou Sun and space for our worship. *Ramankya* (Sundkler 1980:53).

So the prayers to the Creator had to be mediated to "him" through "his" spirits. God is believed to be far away, "he" is transcendent, at the same time as "he" is near and active in the universe (Idowu 1973:155). God, who is invisible, reveals "himself" through "his" creation. The clan's morning prayers in Kiziba had to be directed to the spirit of the sun. The sun was the greatest in God's creation, as we saw in the testimony from Kigezi. God is immanent and close to human beings through "his" mediums and spiritual agents (cf. Kibicho 1990:46). Rugyema (1983:3) describes the contradictory nature of the Creator in the following terms:

> Paradoxically the Most High God is both transcendental–man cannot reach Him–and immanent–so near as to be accessible to man. In terms of transcendence, God dwells far away in the sky, while in terms of immanence He lives everywhere.

Therefore, although the Creator was believed to be far away, "he" could be approached through "his" mediating spirits, who could make themselves known to their chosen medium. It was the great *Mucwezi* spirit *Wamara*, who had called Ma Kyabona to the office of *embandwa* in Karagwe. In her capacity as priest and medium, *embandwa*, she had

the mandate to communicate with the Creator through the spirits. She was said to "know all the spirits" (Farelius 1978:29). When she said: *Ruhanga ekukuume*, 'may God bless you and keep you well', it appears that she prayed to *Ruhanga* on the premise that all the spirits would forward her prayers to *Ruhanga*. The spirits would convey her prayers for my protection and blessings from her to the Creator and then back from the Creator to me.

The archaic words pronounced in the blessing given by the priest in Karagwe through mediation from the Creator, *Ruhanga e-ku-kuume* deserve exposition. This testimony can be interpreted on two levels. Phenomenologically, the grammatical form and verbal concord *e-* suggests that God, the Creator and originator of human beings and the world around them, was believed to be so great and incomprehensible that "he" could not be approached and spoken about on the same level as man/woman. So the traditionalists in Karagwe did not attach to names of the Creator the same verbal concord as to human beings: *a-*.[12] At the same time the verb used in the blessing provides historical information. The verb *-kuume*, from **-kum-* 'to become honoured', is a bridge to the interlacustrine past. Schoenbrun (1990: Table 4.35) argues that **-kumu*, with the meaning 'chief', goes back minimally to the period of Eastern Bantu before 500 BC. A narrowing of **-kumu* to reflect only the spiritual aspect of inherited authority occurred in Great Lakes Bantu ca. 500 BC to ca. 100 AD, when Great Lakes Bantu-speakers innovated **-ami* for political aspects of inherited leadership. **-kumu* denoting spiritual leadership (1990:307-308) occurs in Rutara as *-fumu*, in Western Highlands, *-pfumu*, 'diviner, healer'.[13] So *-kuume*, traditionally used in Karagwe in the blessing, which was mediated from the Creator, is a remnant of an ancient linguistic usage connected to leadership.

Data from Karagwe clarifies the functional role of the *bafumu*, which early Western sources tend to have distorted. Still, in social contexts, educated people in East Africa may refer to their ancestral lines as "witch doctors", when in fact they are *abafumu*–diviners and healers. Nearly ninety years ago a missionary in Ukerewe (Hurel 1911:72) reported

that *bafumu* was used as the general term for specialists in sorcery, divination, healing and a host of other practices ("et il sont légion"), including all traditional religious specialists in one category. Those who curse are *abarogi* and should not be confounded with *abafumu*, whose work is to uphold, not to destroy, society. A generation later, Father Césard (1937:19), writing about the Bahaya, categorised the *bafumu* as practitioners of "Magie blanche" (white magic), correctly calling them "les devins-médecins" (diviners-healers). His conclusion that *abarogi*, were 'sorcerers', practitioner of "black magic" is closer to the reality of the people concerned (1937:21-22).

The reality behind the terminology of the Karagwe and interlacustrine peoples does not allow itself to be fully understood from the theories worked out in terms derived from the frames of reference of outsiders. As will be explained below, *bafumu* should be understood as both diviners and healers because there is no natural cause for sickness in interlacustrine beliefs. So the functional roles of religious and medical specialists have to be understood within the overall context of life and human existence.

Some twenty years later another Catholic missionary, Rev. Father Placide Tempels (1945/1959), changed the focus from "magic" to the perhaps more appealing idea of "vital force". He studied the existential foundations of *Bantu Philosophy* asserting that the concept of "vital force" is an authentic property of "the unique Bantu culture". Tempels' use of the Bergsonian concept of "vital force" was applied to express "the unifying philosophical principle which underlie African religious systems" (Ikenga-Metuh 1987/1992:xxi). In his work *La philosophie bantu-rwandaise de l'Être* (1955) the Rwandan Catholic Father Alexis Kagame introduced the concept of *magara* in the literature.[14] Following this philosophy the Lutheran missionary Holger Benettsson held that in Buhaya the good life, *magara*, springs from *Rugaba*, God, 'the Giver' (1971:201). "Therein lies the very motive for existence", said Rev. Domiciani Tinkaligaile, a theologian from Karagwe (Farelius 1978:26). Sundkler (1980:44-46) analysed the African theological approach of Tinkaligaile and mentioned (1980:46) that, justifiably, he wanted to defend his people against derogatory Western prejudices. In retrospect

the development of a "*magara* philosophy" seems to have been one effort in the search for authenticity (cf. Diagne 1979:170) to assert "Bantu" respectability in the world at large.[15] The old man in Karagwe simply said that *amagara* is life itself that springs from the Creator. *Magara* remains an all-important concept, in Kiziba traditions closely associated with the life-giving milk.

In line with current writings of the 1970's I developed the thesis of *magara* but linked it to the concept of peace, *milembe*, which is implicit in greeting rituals of the Banyambo/Bahaya:

> When life is at its best, it is full of *magara*, a normal state of existence that is signified by the concept of *milembe*, 'peace'.[16] The extensive greeting ritual that had an important role in our village life aimed at creating a relationship with the person approached. And this relationship appeared to imply this state of existence, the quality that is implicit in the concept of the Luhaya/Luganda word *milembe*.[17] *Muli barungi*, 'you are doing well', would be answered *tuliho*, 'we are here', i.e. we are here together, in peace. This normal state of things, emanating from *Rugaba*, the Giver of Life, is always created afresh at every new instance of communication. But the normal state of *milembe* is all the time being threatened by hostility, sickness and death (Farelius 1978:27).

Sickness, hostility, barrenness and death are regarded as abnormal and must be treated by specialists.[18] There is another more meaningful concept for peace and tranquillity, health and "coolness".[19] Katoke together with other Karagwe informants stressed the term *obusinge*,[20] which in view of the overall interpretation of the sources collected for this study appears to be the best word expressing deeper aspects of peace, applicable to Rutara-speaking communities at large, from homestead to kingship level.[21] The Banyambo share the word *obusinge*, 'peace', with the Banyoro (Davis 1938/1952:275).

When the normal state of *obusinge* is threatened an *omufumu* would divine the cause for misfortune and suggest the remedy (cf. Janzen 1992:91). In Karagwe *muraguzi* can also be heard, because it is the task of the *mufumu* to divine, *kuragura*. In Ahakishaka there were several types of *bafumu*, 'diviners', distinguished by their techniques,

for example *omufumu gw'enkoko*,[22] *omufumu gw'emwani*[23] and *omufumu gw'ensimbi*.[24] Along the Ahakishaka village ridge lived a specialist who knew all the medical herbs and their secrets, the *omutambi*, 'doctor' or 'herbalist'. The verb from which the noun was derived, *kutamba*, (Sundkler 1980:56) carries two different meanings, 'to heal' and 'to sacrifice'. So in cases of sickness, barrenness, or death, peace had to be restored through sacrifice. The most likely threat to *obusinge* came from the spiritual realm. Or an envious neighbour might have used *oburogi*, 'witchcraft', to harm the victim (Farelius 1978:28).

Kyabona, the *embandwa*, would then be consulted. Her name *Kyabona* refers to her priestly office of mediumship between the material and the immaterial realities, because the priesthood into which she was initiated to serve implied 'seeing', *okubona*, the invisible world. Iris Berger (1973:151) has found derivations of the root *-bona*, applied in names denoting sacred kingship office-holders or shrine functions in a number of interlacustrine kingdoms. E.g. in Karagwe Katoke (1969:99) had accounted for the priest of *Wamara*, named *Kabona,* officiating on behalf of the kingdom. Snoxall (1967:107) entered *kàbonà* as the term for 'priest' in Luganda.

Hence bearing a priestly title, when consulted by villagers, Kyabona would prepare herself to receive the spirits that would raise into her head, *kutaha omu mutwe*. *Embandwa* is derived from the passive infinitive of the verb *kubanda*, which means 'to possess' (Johanssen 1925:9). *Embandwa* refers to the priest, who is possessed by a spirit, *netaha omu mutwe gw'embandwa*, literally meaning 'it enters into the head of the priest or medium' (cf. Beattie 1964:132 for Bunyoro). The medium and the spirit are symbolically identified to the extent that they are called by the same term, *embandwa*. When the spirit is said to "enter into the head" of the medium it is understood to talk through the medium. Singing and rattling her gourds, *enyege*, she would enter into a kind of dialogue with the spirits, who would advice on what measures to take to restore peace to the afflicted family. In cases of *oburogi* she would exorcise the evil sometimes perceived to be contained in animal horns, *amahembe*. If the cause for unrest had been found to

to the "crowned crane" concept constitute an analytical tool feasible for historical interpretations.

Just as symbolic associations of motherhood characterise the concept of the kingship drum, it will be shown that women of early ruling clans link later dynasties to "the first owners of the soil". The importance of "the first owners of the soil", i.e. those who first settled in the land, will form a link in this study. Consistent with that perception is the concept of *abatakansi*, 'those of the soil of the earth', in which Christians in Buhaya identify those who still adhere to the faith of their ancestors. As will be illustrated there exists a regional pattern whereby spiritual manifestations of the first-comers are held in reverence by succeeding generations. Hence new dynasties had to secure legitimacy from previous owners of the soil.

As we pursue the search for origins of interlacustrine kingship traditions and symbolism, the Creator and the process of creation will be dealt with.

Endnotes

1 Samson, R.P.F., "Vie familiale, n.d.", Unpublished material from the White Fathers, Diocese de Bukoba, B.E.A., permission granted for quotation, Dar-es-Salaam, 5/12 1989.

2 Oral information, 2/5 1995, by Dr Tibamanya Mwene Mushanga, *Omuhweju* by clan, in his village of Kagango in Itendero parish, Kagango subcounty, Shema county in Bushenyi district (formerly Ankole).

3 Cf. for example Hydén (1969:81) for the Bahaya, Beattie (1957a:99) for the Banyoro, Karugire (1971:73) and Mushanga (1970:30) for the Banyankole.

4 Father Charles Nkende in Hoima, Bunyoro, told me that after studying the Luhaya Dictionary written by the Very Reverend Father Ignace J. Bona-Baisi (1960) he had been amazed to find many words of "deep Runyoro" extraction still in use by the Bahaya. Some of that vocabulary would by now be extinct in Bunyoro (BFFN/7:73, 1992).

5 Bunyoro: *Omucwa* Ausi Rwakaikara, BFFM:961, 1992.

6 I follow the terminology suggested by Schoenbrun (1990:133-135), who uses Rutara for subgroup B of the West Nyanza group of successor languages of the Great Lakes Bantu (see Table 1). Derek Nurse calls the same group Kitara (1982:207), but I think Rutara is more fitting, because the prefix *ru-* denotes languages in the languages concerned. Makerere scholars chose the name Runyakitara for the Degree Course that was introduced at the then Department of Languages in 1991. It included a reflection on the shared historical background of Runyoro/Rutoro/Runyankore/Rukiga-speaking peoples ("'Runyakitara' language launched", *The New Vision*, September 4th, 1990:12).

7 *Mukuru w'oruganda* is the name used for 'clan head' in Karagwe (Katoke 1975:4), Buhaya: Kyamutwara (Kaijage 1971:547) and Bunyoro alike (Beattie 1957b:323).

8 White Fathers, "Enquetes sur les Coutumes et Moeurs Indigenes", La Parenté, Le Mariage, Kashozi, Bukoba, undated and unpublished, p. 4.

9 Personal communication in Dar-es-Salaam, October 1986, from Prof. S.K. Lutahoire of the *Balisa* clan, Karagwe.

10 The proto-Bantu root **-ziro*, 'avoidance' is shared by Rutara-, North Nyanza- and West Highlands speech communities (Schoenbrun 1997:189-190).

11 The White Fathers, "Enquetes sur les Coutumes et Moeurs Indigenes", La Parenté, Le Mariage, p. 4. In his thesis *The Catholic Evangelization of Kagera in North-West Tanzania* Father Method Kilaini (1990:7-8), takes up this use of the term 'taboo' for *omuziro* from his predecessors.

12 Nkore: Mzee Israel Katuuka, BFFM:581, 1992.

13 Information in Kampala, 23/1 1992, from Mr Coleb Kamugungunu, son of L. Kamugungunu, who wrote *Abagabe b'Ankole* (the Ankole kings) together with A.G. Katate (1955).

14 Ma Verena Rwentabaza, a Mututsi from Rwanda, shared *Mushambo* clan affiliation with Ma Kambabaze, a potter and fisherman's widow. For Rwanda Hertefelt (1971) has stressed the multi-class nature of the clans (*Les clans du Rwanda ancien*).

15 Justin Willis, in his study (1997) on "Clan and History in Western Uganda: A New Perspective on the Origins of Pastoral Dominance", makes an attempt to deconstruct the historicity of clans in East Africa. Departing from a field study in one of the small former kingdoms in south-western Uganda, Buhweju, he does not see the full picture. I regard variations within the clan system as plausible proof of time depth rather than evidence to show that there is no history traceable in that system.

16 Igara: Mzee Benedicto K. Mubangizi confirmed this information (BFFM:656-657, 1992).

17 Information and clarification from Mr G.T. Mishambi, himself a Muhororo from Rujumbura, BFFN/6:108, 1993.

18 Cf. the discussion by Beattie (1957b:322-323), where he failed to find a viable term for sub-clan in Runyoro. I confirmed this conclusion with a Mutooro, whose language is nearly the same (oral communication with Mr Apuuri Bamuruho, Kampala, 12/10 1995).

19 The locative prefixes *ka-* and *-bu* belong to the Bantu noun class No. 14 (p.c. from Abdulaziz Lodhi, Lecturer in Swahili and Bantuistics, University of Uppsala, 1987).

20 Cf. Taylor, *Runyankore-Rukiga-English and English-Runyankore-Rukiga Dictionary*, East African Literature Bureau, 1959:35.

21 Bere used the term "chief" for the Acholi *Rwot*. As will be shown in the course of the book it is appropriate to describe those "chiefs" who possessed drums, spears and other regalia of office as *kings* (cf. Denoon 1972:10 for the context of the *Banyangoma* states in Kinkizi, Rukungiri district). The evidence brought to bear on this issue will demonstrate that the *Rwodi* of Acholi, in virtue of their office, possess such regalia.

22 Information given by the spokesman of Pajule clan elders in Acholi, Mr Ventorino Too (BFFM:1080, 1993).

23 Information 1/4 1976 in Ahakishaka, Karagwe, from Ta Elias Lugimbana.

24 Mr Olanya said that the *kika* of the Pajule, refers to a smaller group living together in a village. The members of the *kika* would share meat from the animals they slaughtered and judiciary cases would be solved at the level of the *kika* (information in Kampala 6/10 1995).

25 The praise naming custom, which is only found in Bunyoro and Tooro, testifies to these Luo/Bantu interactions. When the Banyoro and the Batooro meet for the first time, they would immediately ask for their respective *mpako*. The twelve existing *mpako* names are Nilotic in origin (cf. Beattie 1957a:99) the use of which is a sign of the deepest respect and intimacy, but the original meaning of the names is usually not known among the Bantu-speakers.

26 Information given by the historian Mr Onyango Odongo of the Puranga clan, Gulu district (Kampala 14/4 1995).

27 The common Western Nilotic word for 'door', 'gate' or 'extended family' is *dogola* (information given by L.J. Opira BFFN/7:135, 1993 and Onyango Odongo BFFN/7:138, 1993).

be an *omuzimu* of a dead relative, she would advise the family to erect a small shrine, *endaro*, outside the house, where the *omuzimu* would be regularly approached by gifts, *empongano*, of whatever food and drink they had. They would gently "talk" to the spirit and ask for forgiveness, *kwetongesa* (cf. Farelius 1978:29-30).[25]

God, the Creator of all things, both good and evil, could cause death, if it were according to "his" will (Farelius 1978:24).[26] When the specialists had done everything deemed appropriate to redress the situation to no avail, the last resort would be to approach the Creator. Father Césard recorded from Buhaya in 1927 that in a crisis of this nature the father of the household carried his sick family member in his arms to the *irembo*, the open courtyard in front of the house. With his eyes lifted towards the sky he pronounced a prayer to the Creator, *Rugaba*:

Rugaba, okahanga abantu bona, bali bairu bawe, nobasiga aha ruguru anga nobanaga kuzimu tutwegoha, leba omushaija wawe ogu, omutugarulire murungi, osingire.

Rugaba, you have created every human being, they are your servants (slaves), they are all preserved at your mercy. As you wish you have the power to let them live or die. We implore you, have pity on this man of yours, bring him back well to us, may you give us peace and grant us our prayer (Césard 1927:446).[27]

The Bakiga say that *Ruhanga* should not be bothered unless the case is "very acute and impossible for the ministers to settle" (Bakaitwako 1974:3). Only as the last resort can the Creator intervene directly in the daily activities of human beings (cf. Rugyema 1983:2) but in the vast majority of cases the immanence of the Creator is mediated through "his ministers", *abafumu* 'diviners' and *abatambi* 'doctors, healers'. In cases of general calamities like famine, the *emandwa* 'priest' could approach greater spirits, also termed *emandwa*, like *Mugasha*,[28] believed to be intermediaries to the Creator. The *Bacwezi* and related forms in local variations of spiritual manifestation play such an important part in the life of the peoples between the Lakes that they will be treated at length

below. Their relevance here is that although the Creator is believed to be far away, to be transcendent, prayers and gifts can be offered to "him" through intermediaries, most importantly the *emandwa*, and then "he" is immanent. As Rugyema (1983:2) has explained, the Bakiga made "offerings", *empongano*, to the spirits who in turn forwarded the *empongano* to the "Most High God". Therefore, when the spirits were approached by "offerings", it was "on the understanding that the role delegated to these spirits is that of an intermediary between the people and the Most High God".

However, the term "High God" in reference to the Creator in the interlacustrine region is misleading, because it enhances the transcendence of God in disregard of "his" immanence. In other words, the term does not do justice to the presence of the Creator through intermediaries (cf. Parrinder 1969:39). "High God" implies God is far away, when in fact "he" is believed to be everywhere, both distant and, through "his" intermediaries, close to human beings. It is appropriate and in accordance with the traditional belief system of the people in the Great Lakes Bantu successor language societies themselves to use the term Creator.

Owners of the Soil

As the source of life and procreation, the Creator had shaped the social context of human society–the clan: Rutara *ruganda*; North Nyanza *ekika*; Western Highlands *ubwooko*. The "philosophy of creation" of the Bakiga is connected with the "First Founders" of the *enganda* (Rugyema 1983:2). Ntambi za Mukama of Buganda in turn described the *emisambwa* clan spirits as "the first creation".[29] In other words, the *emisambwa* were the spiritual manifestations of the *abasangwa*, 'those who were found', so named by those who came afterwards. The *emishambwa* spiritual manifestations became powerful agents to protect the interests of clans with first-comer status. These clan beliefs also (Schoenbrun 1994-1995:280), "expressed a ritual dimension to the concepts of residential or territorial social identity, a dimension which moved easily to new settlements". Characteristically, *emisambwa* beliefs and shrines are found in settlements near and along the shorelines of

Lake Victoria, in Buzinza, Buhaya, Buganda and Busoga, among the present speakers of Rutara and North Nyanza language groups. This means that the term dates from the West Nyanza period or spread along the Lake somewhat later. Schoenbrun (1994-1995:280) concluded that by roughly 500 AD the term was well established. Ehret (1971:157) has shown that before AD 1000 the *emisambwa* concept had spread to proto-Kalenjin (Southern Nilotic) communities, who borrowed the word from a branch of Great Lakes Bantu spoken east of North Nyanza. The two dates are mutually corroborative.

E.W. Smith (1952:31) observed that the reverence for the earth in which ancestors are buried seems to be fairly widespread in Africa. He stressed one common characteristic of shrines devoted to former owners of the soil. They can be localised to a small community, but having no boundaries "their spirits may influence wide areas or the territory of a whole nation". In relation to the soil of the land those clan beliefs could apply to protection of states. In the region between the lakes there is evidence to demonstrate that the same clan concept relating to fierce animals protecting the soil of the first-comers became useful in the context of wider state territories, not only in areas sharing ecological factors that make perennial agriculture feasible. Significantly, lions, leopards and snakes are associated with kingship beliefs both among the agripastoralist societies of the central grasslands, whose populations lack *emishambwa* terminology, and among some of the societies along the lake retaining *emishambwa* terminology. As we shall see, lions, leopards or snakes are perceived as spirits of kings incarnate, influencing the territory of the whole nationality.

Where kings' spirits are believed to embody fierce animals protecting wider state territories, the life-giving milk appears to be ritual medium to transform the king's spirit into lions, leopards or snakes. Only six of my informants mentioned that milk was involved in the transformation, but older sources complement a pattern that can be discerned both for old kingdoms in the grasslands of the interior (Karagwe, Nkore, Rwanda and Bugufi) and for those situated along Lake Victoria (Buhaya: Kyamutwara Kianja, Ihangiro, Maruku and Bugabo).[30]

In the old kingdoms of Karagwe, Nkore, Igara, and Rujumbura, lacking *emisambwa* terminology, spirits of kings were believed to enter into the shape of lions.[31] There is one exception here concerning the Bazinza. At the same time they have *emisambwa*, the Bazinza of the Rusubi old kingdom believe in royal spiritual manifestations in lions.[32] The Banyambo call these lions *ekinyagashani*, 'of the royal tombs'.[33] Speke's companion, James Grant (1864), reported that lions protected the "mausoleum" of the former "sultan". So no kingdom was deemed more powerful than Karagwe: "No one dare attack us! Lions guard us!"(1864:145). Neither did any other *Bahinda* royal clan than the one in Karagwe respect the lion as a protective, secondary totem (Cory and Hartnoll 1945, Appendix V:7). For Rwanda Father Pagès (1933:518) documented kingship burial rituals. According to Kinyarwanda belief the king's spirit took the shape of a leopard. The leopard was also recorded as the totem of the king (1933:520). Even among the subjects of the small kingdom of Kayonza in Kinkizi county (Rukungiri), one of the *Banyangoma* states, there is a traditional belief that the spirits of their *Barengye* kings enter into leopards (Ruharo 1973:42).

The West Highland-speaking Bahangaza as well as the people of the Tusi successor states of Heru and Ufipa believe that kings do not die, they reappear in the form of pythons, *insato*, in Bugufi said to be connected with the royal tombs, *Nyakasani*.[34] *Mwami* Theresa Ntare said that although the python is especially regarded as an incarnation of the royal ancestors in Heru and Ufipa, the snake, the leopard and the lion, all the three of them are together perceived as powerful ancestral manifestations:

> At installation the *insato*, python, comes to the house and licks honey from the king's hands and then it licks his/her whole body, which means that you are accepted by the *mizimu*, 'ancestors'. It is regarded as a sign of ancestral blessing. If the ancestors did not accept the king, the python would kill him/her. Then comes the leopard, then the lion.[35]

Thus *Mwami* Theresa Ntare clarified that no king could rule without the blessing of the former owners of the soil, mediated through their ancestral spiritual embodiments in lion/leopard/snake form.

Documented as clan *emisambwa/emishambwa* among Rutara- and North Nyanza speech communities along the lake, lion/leopard/snake beliefs appear to have a similar function for spirits of kings in the grasslands of the interior (Karagwe[36], Nkore, Igara, Rwanda, Heru). Therefore, the existence of this pattern in relation to kingship overlaps Rutara and West Highland-speaking people's old kingdoms, a distribution that indicates continuation of an ancient belief system into later settlements of the interior.

In Buhaya the *emishambwa* were spirits of first-comer clans at the same time the king's spirits were believed to enter into big snakes (cf. Cory 1949:93). According to local beliefs, snakes, usually *enkorantima*, 'python', embody spirits of kings in Buhaya.[37] Territorial spiritual manifestations from the localised clan context operated simultaneously for the wider state area, a pattern that E.W. Smith had observed for a wider African context. But at the same time as they cherish snakes as reincarnations of kings, the Bahaya have adopted the no doubt later custom to preserve the whole skull of the king. Mwalimu Yazidi Makora elaborates for the context of Ihangiro:

The head was dried, *okukara*, completely, then decorated with beads, *enkwanzi*, then placed in a special basket, *eirangira*, with a special cover and placed behind the curtain, *kisika*, in the main house of the *kikale*, where the king and the kingship drum resided, *Nyaruju*.[38]

In his notes on Kianja kingship burial customs, Rev. Matia Lutosha explained that the place where the king's head was preserved was perceived to be a royal enclosure, *kikale*, not a grave, *egashani*, because they had not buried the corpse there, they had only left the head with its guardian.[39] The perception behind this custom is presumably that the king continued to rule from another *kikale* after death. More research is needed to find out if the guardian of the skull had any function as medium for the king's spirit, as was the case for the jawbone shrines of the Baganda.

The Baganda and the Banyoro substituted the whole skull for the jawbone, *orusaya*.[40] Oliver (1959), who studied royal tombs in Buganda, observed that "the dual system of jawbone temple and body-tomb is confined to Buganda and Bunyoro. As Ingham (1953:138) had learnt

from the Banyoro, Oliver concluded that this custom appeared "to have been an innovation of the Bito dynasty" (1959:125). But the Baganda, not the Banyoro, had developed the jawbone temple system furthest; the very title of their king anticipated the perpetual role of kings to continue to rule through spiritual mediums. *Kabaka* means 'the jaw of': *kaba ka*.[41] When the *Kabaka* had been installed on the throne of his ancestors he was carried on the leopard-skin covered shoulders of a man of the *Mbogo*, 'Buffalo' clan, whose function was said to be *mukongozzi*, 'bearer'.[42] The medium at the jawbone shrine dedicated to the service of a departed king is also called *mukongozzi*, 'bearer' (Ray 1991: Plate 6), because it is his/her duty to convey the messages from the spirit of the *Ssekabaka* to the living *Kabaka* (Ray 1991:43).[43] So the ritual preservation of the jaw in Buganda appears to serve as a corporeal sign of royal spiritual presence in an institutionalised spirit mediumship cult. Therefore, the *Kabaka*'s spirit is not believed to enter into any fierce animal shape. The *emisambwa* complex of beliefs in Buganda is presently confined to the context of clans.

Plate 4. **After the traditional part of his installation Kabaka Ronald Mwenda Mutebi II is carried on the shoulders of the mukongozzi, 'the bearer'**

For Bunyoro Ingham (1953) could not document any consistent pattern pertaining to the separation of jawbone and body-tomb. The *amagasani* graves or shrines of the *Babiito* dynasty in Bunyoro that Ingham found scattered in Western Uganda, either contain the jawbone or body separately or the whole body of the kings (see 1953: Fig. 3). The Banyoro seem to attach more importance to the jaw, *ensaya*, than to the corpse of the king. But there is no indication that the jaw was severed from the corpse and preserved for the purpose of any spirit mediumship cult as we have observed for Buganda. Instead, said *Omubiitokati* M. Burara, to the *Babiito* the king's jawbone played a decisive part at accession. When the king's corpse had been buried the sons would start a serious fight and the survivor would be considered the legitimate heir because he was the owner of the jaw. The new king would be installed before they buried the jaw with the old king's corpse.[44]

The question is now whether there is any belief in the king's spirit incarnate in lions, leopards or snakes in Bunyoro as has been demonstrated for Karagwe and other Rutara and West Highland-speaking kingdoms. Documentation from Bunyoro in any case ascertains the existence of a special leopard, *Rwengo*, who had its own house:

> In that house there used to stay a young cow and a woman with the same title as the royal wife, *Omugo*. They used to serve goat's meat to the leopard from a specific place. *Rwengo* was free to move wherever it wanted within the premises of the *kikaali*. At night it would lie at the entrance of the *kikaali*. It was like a dog in the *kikaali* and it used to protect the king. There was also a lion, which was fed with goat's meat at a specific place, when it came to the *kikaali* occasionally and stayed in the regalia room. It was called the King's lion and as it was not harmful, the king could touch it.[45]

So in the Bunyoro *kikaali* the leopard, not the lion, appears to be associated with protection. In Karagwe the lion was perceived as the king's dog, whereas Banyoro kings kept the leopard "like a dog" in the *kikaali* for protection. Still there is no evidence to prove that the Banyoro believe their royal ancestors took the shape of leopards although leopards served as kings' protectors. Neither do the Batooro

seem to recollect any belief of this nature,[46] in spite of the fact that the king had both a leopard and a lion.[47] Perhaps the protective function of the leopard at the Bunyoro *kikaali* is a remnant of an ancient pre-*Babiito* belief pattern pertaining to kingship. The solution to the problem will now be sought within the context of the Kinyoro belief system.

As has been accounted for in the beginning of this chapter, the Banyoro believe spirits reside "in the hills, caves, valleys, rivers and many different places". We have seen that there have been sustained and intimate contacts across the Luo/Bantu borderlands. The most common type of spirit revelation among the Luo is the *jok* (pl. *jogi*) that is associated with a particular place, often a mountain or a hill (Adefuye 1976:283). The Kinyoro perception of spirits living in the hills would be a natural outcome of these cross-cultural interactions. The elders I interviewed for the Pajule spiritual kingship institution deny categorically the existence of any belief that spirits of their important ancestors would reappear in the form of fierce animals. Referring to their "spiritual king" *Lagoro* with historical connections to Bunyoro, they said that *Lagoro* would reveal itself to its chosen mediums. Worth noting is the fact that when *Lagoro*'s spirit had chosen its successor to the spiritual kingship institution in Pajule, the skull of the predecessor is removed from the grave and taken to a common burial place of the skulls of *Rwot Tipu*, 'spiritual king'.[48] So the removal and reburial of the skull in Pajule is linked to the accession to the office of spiritual kingship, an office that in Pajule was separate from but paramount to political kingship, *Rwot Kitupa*.[49] For Bunyoro we have seen that the ritual function of the jawbone primarily concerns accession and legitimacy to power and does not involve spirit mediumship, as is the case in Buganda.

Schoenbrun (1994-1995:280) has suggested that the lack of *emis/h /ambwa* terminology pertaining to the first owners of the soil is symptomatic of disappearing integration and stability among herding societies. However, the evidence investigated here has shown that a similar belief pattern not termed *emisambwa* but linked to kings, whose spirits incarnate in lions, leopards and snakes can be documented for

several Rutara- and West Highlands-speaking old kingdoms. Bunyoro and Tooro deviate from this pattern. In consistency with belief patterns among the Luo-speaking Pajule, the spirits of the Banyoro kings are not believed to enter into the shape of lions, leopards or snakes, although the kings kept leopards for protection. Neither did the Banyoro have any jawbone shrine institution that transferred messages mediated in spirit mediumship, as is the case in Buganda, although Oliver thought that the *Babiito* originated this custom.

As will be shown in the course of this book, the institution of the *embandwa* spirit mediumship cult could have emerged in response to the stress societies experienced in face of specific environmental and social problems that preceded and followed the onset of *Babiito* rule. According to the interlacustrine belief system, God, the Creator of life was a reality and was expected to restore peace and health, *businge*, to suffering populations. The *embandwa* spirit mediumship cult can have originated as a vehicle of spirits of kings, *Bacwezi*. It follows that the *Bacwezi* had to be planted in the soil of the earth of Bunyoro because the *Babiito* would have needed the blessing of the former owners of the soil. The spirits residing in the hills of Bunyoro are also termed *Bacwezi*.[50] The *Rwot Tipu* spiritual kingship institution in Pajule is late and could have originated in the cultural context of the Luo/Bantu borderlands of Bunyoro.

The populations that would develop different economic bases, one rooted in perennial agriculture in the high rainfall regime along the lake, and the other a mixed agri-pastoralism in the drier interior, shared similar beliefs in the Creator. We have seen that local variations express the same belief pattern bestowing unexceptional reverence to the origin of life itself, the Creator. As the history of the peoples unfolds, it does so perceived in terms of God's continuous creation.

The "Creation" in Clan and Kingship Traditions

Oral traditions that are carriers of certain names containing important messages from the past are recounted in the present. They can be tales that relate some remarkable event from the common history of the people transferring them to succeeding generations. But in order

to make the story relevant for the listener the storyteller paints the picture in colours that are well known to that specific society at that particular time (cf. Pender-Cudlip 1972:11). Cosmologies, or traditions assuming the form of origin myths, can reflect a people's shared history of migration and settlement, perceived as a creation *in situ* (Vansina 1985:22). However, traditions that reflect important events allocated in the time of myth transcend historical time and need not mirror a first settlement.

From within the logic of the sources themselves, I will now examine evidence from Buhaya and Buganda that can shed light on of the way first-comer clans can be perceived as a "first creation". Then follows an examination of culture heroes associated with hunting, fishing and iron working drawn from sources derived from a wide number of southern kingdoms. From the horizon of Karagwe perceived as "grandfather of kings", the material culture mirrored in rituals and beliefs pertaining to the *embandwa Mugasha* will be examined. Thirdly, the belief that interlacustrine kingship originated in Bunyoro will be illustrated by an origin myth told at court in Buhaya.

"The First Creation"

Carole Buchanan's (1974) "Kitara" clan histories connect settlement and clan formation. Karagwe data corroborates her conclusion that the process of migration and settlement is related to clan formation. For example the *Balisa* clan in Masheshe village revered the first settler as spiritual leader. An account from Buhaya merits quotation in full because it illustrates how prominent original settlement leaders would become the spirit of the clan believed to continue to influence his descendants after death:

> As a settlement grew, the original leader, after several generations, became to his descendants a mythical figure. He became known as *omugurusi* or patriarch. His deeds and prowess during his life-time were extolled and exaggerated, and if he had been a very outstanding character, he might be promoted to the position of the spirit of the clan, because of the belief that the more powerful a man was in life, the more influential is his spirit on the lives of his descendants (Korit-Schoner and Hartnoll 1942:1).

Applied to the context of kings, the belief in powerful men becoming still more powerful as spirits is found in a wider area of Bantu-speaking Africa. In an article on the history of Lozi religion in south-west Zambia, Mitumba Mainga (1972:96) wrote that the special position the king held was believed to continue after death. This means that after death he became even more powerful than during his human life. The oral record of interlacustrine clan names investigated in the present chapter documents continuity from the past. As the early history of clan origins unfolds, the possibility of identifying individual clan spirits with early clan leaders emerges. There is not much doubt that those clan leaders were rulers.

The *emisambwa* (Luganda)/*emishambwa* (Luhaya) were clan or lineage spirits of the 'localised agnatic group' and they remain significant after their descendants have left. Buhaya sources, understood within the general framework of clan related beliefs in the region, raise interesting questions about the origin of *emishambwa*. Katoke (1971:701) explained the emergence of ruling clans in Ihangiro:

> As time went by some clans started to gain ascendancy over others, thus becoming ruling clans. For example, it is said that in Southern Ihangiro the first clan to claim superiority over others was that of the *Bashambwe*. These people are believed to have come from the north and ruled with a dictatorial type of system.

Kaijage (1971:548) wrote that oral traditions recorded in Kyamutwara mention the *Bashambwe* as the first ruling clan, renowned also for dictatorial harshness. Were the *emishambwa* clan spirits, which bear first-comer status in the areas where they occur, originally the spirits of the *Bashambwe* a dynastic name traced back to the early history of Buhaya? Their ancestral spirits took the shape of dangerous animals like lions, leopards and snakes, testifying to the fear they had elicited in life.

The Baganda relate of a "snake king", *Bemba*, who lived on Naggalabi hill (Kiwanuka 1971:5). Commanding his rule with harshness, he is said to have known how to maintain law and order without fighting. *Kintu*, the "the primal ancestor of the Baganda and the founder of kingship" (Ray 1991:54), is said to have conquered the hill and replaced

the "snake king".[51] The founding role the Baganda attach to *Kintu* is still celebrated as they install their *Kabaka* on the very hill of Naggalabi at Buddo. The identification of *Bemba* as a snake does not necessarily mean that the tradition is untrue, as Kiwanuka (1971:5) presumed. There is not much doubt that Bemba has come down in history as a snake because his roles as king and spiritual manifestation have been conflated. Those were the *emisambwa*, the spirits of the first settlers that Ntambi za Mukama had identified as "the first creation". Originally perhaps the ancestral spirits to pioneering ruling clans in Buhaya and Buganda, the *emishambwa/emisambwa* complex of clan related beliefs became useful in the context of settled life spreading along Lake Victoria around AD 500.

"Grandparents of Kings"–*Mugasha* and *Irungu*

Oral traditions, being told in the present, naturally make use of terminology relevant to the contemporary audience. Although describing events that took place before the era of centralised rule epitomised in the royal title *Omukama*, Kaijage's (1971:548-549) sources from the Buhaya kingdom of Kyamutwara contend that the *Batundu* were "the second dynasty" to rule the country.[52] Local oral traditions recorded by Kaijage place their origin in Bunyoro. For Karagwe Katoke had observed that all the clans who were at the royal court tended to associate themselves with Bunyoro for status.[53] The notion that the *Batundu* came from Bunyoro appears to reflect later political developments projected on early rulers. Cory and Hartnoll (1945: App. V:29) list the *Batundu* in Kyamutwara as "indigenous", information that perhaps is more likely to be correct. The *Batundu* was an important early ruling clan in Buhaya. The last head of the *Batundu* was *Irungu*, who is said to have been a very brave hunter. Kaijage's sources mention him retrospectively as *Mukama*, a title given by later *Bahinda* kings.[54] As we shall see, Buchanan's (1974:60) evidence from "the Kitara complex" shows the same tendency to apply the title *Mukama*, to "ancestors who were politically prominent". Nevertheless,

those politically prominent ancestors most probably were rulers. This means they can have been kings.

The *Batundu* clan in Buhaya is generally associated with the symbolic identification, or totem, of the leopard. In one case the *Batundu* clan members are said to have taken as their clan spirit a leopard called *Mugerwa*, who lived in a certain forest.[55] This perception clearly reflects *emishambwa* beliefs in spiritual manifestations guarding the rights of the first settlers. In Kiziba and Karagwe the *Batundu* clan spirit is *Irungu*, associated with hunting.[56]. The courageous hunter *Irungu*, whose name means wilderness, said to have been the last king of the *Batundu* in Kyamutwara, became the spirit of hunters and the wilderness. As spirit of the wilderness, "he" is the spirit of all wild animals in the world. Opposite the entrance of the *kikale* in Kyamutwara, in Kabale village, a shrine (called *Nyaruju* in the *kikale*) was erected to *Irungu*, because "he" is the one who brings things in. "He" is perceived as the one who does the inviting and a well-wisher of everything that comes into the *kikale*.[57] A Karagwe source mentions that *Irungu* was an iron-worker,[58] agreeing that *Irungu*, the last *Mutundu* clan-head, was reported as the spirit and "guide of iron workers" in Buhaya.[59]

Osogo (1970:35) writes that in all centralised states in East Africa some clans performed certain tasks for the ruling family. Indeed, the hereditary duties performed by important clans at the kings' courts were not services for the ruling families alone, but should be seen as duties performed for the kingdom.[60] *Omukama* E. Rukamba of Kyamutwara stressed the importance of the *Batundu* clan as a "functional" clan in the *kikale* during the time of his ancestors. First of all they were blacksmiths and made spears for the king of Kyamutwara. They also "invite rain, *kuiga enjura*, in order to allow the people and their crops to grow", praying to the ancestral spirits "to request them to allow the people to get rain".[61] Then another very essential duty of the *Batundu* clan was to bless symbolically every new building in the country. Before you erect a house, traditionally a *Mutundu* had to have a symbolic house built on his head.[62] This custom supports the impression that the *Batundu* were among the first on the land. With first-comer status they also

"possessed the right of being *Baharambwa*" (cf. Korit-Schoner and Hartnoll 1942:9-10), who traditionally blessed the soil enabling the people to cultivate and flourish.[63]

The hereditary duty of the *Batundu* in Karagwe, also called *Baheta*, was to prepare the beer for the New Moon rituals in the *ekikare* of Bweranyange (Katoke 1975:150). The afore-mentioned alternative name calls for further regional cross-examination of clans. Betbeder (1971:737-738) states that the dynasty claimed to have ruled Buzinza (Rusubi) before "the *Bahinda* invasion" were *Balenge*, also called *Baheta* or *Batundu*. Linked to iron-working and rain-calling the *Bareenge* in Rwanda appear to belong to the same cultural stratum. Quoting Kagame's (1955) "tutsi sources" Ogot (1984:516) concluded not only that "*Renge* lineages of the Singa clan" could have established the oldest state in Rwanda, possibly covering "most of modern Rwanda except the eastern section" but also that they "had developed a complex system of kingship".[64] Documenting kingship beliefs and traditions in the *Banyangoma* state Kayonza, in the past ruled by the *Barengye* dynasty, Ruharo stated that they had migrated from Rwanda, "where they are believed to have been rulers" (1973:12). We have seen that beliefs in royal spiritual incarnation in leopards are common to the Banyarwanda and the people of Kayonza. Likewise, *emishambwa* beliefs connected to leopards, specifically, could be observed for the *Batundu* in Buhaya. As will be demonstrated shortly, the leopard is also the totem of the *Abazigaba* in Rwanda.

The *Abazigaba* are another early clan primarily associated with iron working and rain-calling. Ogot states that they "seem to have formed part of the earliest agricultural stratum in the region" (1984:510). My sources from Rwanda mention the *Abazigaba* as one of the pioneering clans, the first settlers that have come down in history as *abasangwabutaka*, 'those who were found on the land' (Rennie 1971/1972:12).[65] Accordingly, the status of the *Aba-zi-gaba* as first owners of the soil is contained in their name. They are "owners", but as owners they are also perceived as "givers", from *ku-gaba*, 'to give'.[66] A Kinyarwanda tradition connects *Kazigaba*, a hunter and the first

ancestor of the *Abazigaba*, to the taming and first milking of cattle.[67] So at court *Abazigaba* clan officials had to retain the duty of keeping the king's cattle.[68] Linguistic evidence previously accounted for lends credibility to cattle keeping as being ancient in the region.

The *Abazigaba* are known to have been rulers in the ancient state of *Mubari* in the far east of Rwanda (Ogot 1984:510). Local people locate *Mubari* just on the border to the present Karagwe. They refer to themselves as *ba Mubali gwa Kabaijo*, 'from the village ruled by Kabaijo', where they originated and from whence they had dispersed.[69] Ogot (1984:510) placed *Abazigaba* in large numbers among the Banyankore and in north Kigezi (Rujumbura). Their presence can here be substantiated for West Highlands speech communities; the already mentioned Rwanda, but also for Bugufi, Bushuubi and Buha.[70] Details on the *Abazigaba* in the following Rutara-speaking old kingdoms will be given below: Karagwe, Kyamutwara, Kiziba, Ihangiro, Rusubi (Buzinza), Kayonza and Igara. Hence they tend to be localised to the southern areas of the region. The totem of the *Abazigaba* varies according to their location. In Rwanda it is the leopard, *ingwe*, in Ankore the striped cow, *ente engoobe*, and in Karagwe and Buhaya the bushbuck, *engabi*. Ogot (1984:511) argues that their wide distribution and variation of totems strongly support the existence of an ancient state from which they migrated over a considerable length of time. The leopard totem of the *Abazigaba* in Rwanda correlates with the local belief that kings' spirits would enter into the shape of leopards, a belief pattern observed for the first owners of the soil, attested above for the *Barengye* (Kayonza) as well as the *Batundu* (Buhaya).

In Kyamutwara the *Abazigaba* were blacksmiths.[71] The *Abazigaba* connection to iron working can also be established for Kiziba[72] and Kayonza in Rukungiri (Ruharo 1973:70, Kamuhangire 1993:290). In Buganda, Trowell (1941:48) stated that members of the *Ngabi*, Bushbuck clan were among the first ironworkers. Hartwig's (1970?:10-11) research in Ukerewe pointed to the *Gabe* clan as controller of the smelting process and its products. Connecting ironworking with ritual functions, Hartwig mentions the *Gabe* together with the *Zigu* as one among the four, ritually strong, early ruling clans.

The *Abazigaba*, also called *Baligi*, had prominent hereditary duties, *emiruka* or *emyoga*, at the Karagwe *kikare* in *Bweranyange*. They were drum keepers (Cory and Hartnoll 1945, App.V:32), keepers of the everlasting fire (Katoke 1975:32), as well as members of the king's council. *Kinyanyengoma* said they belonged to the important clans of *enfura*, the good clans that were allowed to come near the royal drum.[73] Noteworthy, *Kinyanyengoma* did not say that the *enfura* clans were *Bahima*, as has been stressed in earlier sources that overlooked the fact that interlacustrine clan affiliation transits social strata (for example Cory and Hartnoll 1945:281 and Hydén 1969:77).[74] *Omwana* Amelia Mutahangarwa in Kiziba mentioned the *Batundu* as a "hima" clan,[75] a category that in this context would apply to aristocracy, not to any presumed "pure pastoral" origin. As iron workers the *Batundu* would not have been involved with specialised pastoralism.[76]

In view of the overall picture emerging from the sources investigated, names and terms pertaining to spiritual manifestations and hereditary ritual functions appear to associate the origin of the *Batundu* and the *Abazigaba* with the outcome of the process of cultural fusion and multilingual interactions, when rouletted pottery replaced Urewe after 700 AD. McMaster (p.c. afore-mentioned) has demonstrated the important role beer had in the process of cultural amalgamation between the lakes. Rain calling rituals led by the *Abazigaba* were effected in beer prepared the same day, *amarwa ag'eihira*.[77] The symbolic embodiment of ritual blessing was expressed in terms associated with the material culture of rouletted pottery. *En-gata*, the head ring, is needed to support roulette-decorated pots, their convex base preventing them from standing alone. *Ru-gata*, 'the big (powerful and important) head ring' is a ritual implement used for rain calling. The 'drum sister', *Kinyanyengoma*, of *Omukama* Rumanyika II said that the *Abazigaba bakaba bali barugata, nibaiga enjura*, 'the *Abazibaga* were of the *rugata*, they used to invite rain' for the kingdom of Karagwe.[78] The last main drum keeper of Karagwe, Mzee Kajungu, over 100 years old, related that the *rugata* was perceived as a dried fish, *eki-furu*.[79] Petro Bukoko's details complement the following description of the *rugata* rain calling ritual:

> There was a man of the *Abazigaba* clan, Rwabunuma,[80] who was the keeper of *rugata*. The *rugata* looked like a big head ring, the prefix *ru-* indicating that it was big (like a tyre). It was described in terms of a dried fish, usually kept in a skin bag, *omufuku gw'engozi*, hung over the principal royal drum *Nyabatama* in its house *Kagondo*. At the time of the new moon beer was prepared. They added certain herbs (*emyeza*, *emigoshoro* and *emigashani*) to the beer. Rwabunuma would don a ritual garb of a leopard skin, *engwe*, or a skin of a cerval cat, *emondo*. He removed the *rugata* from its skin bag and placed it in the small *obwato* 'trough', literally 'boat'. Then he would pour the beer through the hole in the *rugata*, which would expand. The fish swelled and became alive and the more it expanded, the more rain would fall. This ritual was customarily performed on the first day of the New Moon, *Okwezi kwemire–ekiro ky'okubanza*, at eight o'clock in the evening. Within two hours black clouds would appear and bring rain. The people would get rain and their crops would ripen and bring enough food. The kings used the *embandwa*, 'spirit', of *Mugasha* to invite rain. The *Abazigaba* were like the kings' priests, who prayed to *Mugasha* for rain and *rugata* was like an altar.[81]

Accordingly, the implement for rain calling in Karagwe was expressed by the symbolic representation of a fish in the material form of *rugata* handled by *Abazigaba* clan officials. Noteworthy, in the Mpororo successor state Igara there is a *Bashambo* sub-clan named *Abazigaba Abazirangata*, a denomination which implies that their totem is *engata*.[82] The explanation that the first ancestors fought over a beautiful *engata*, and that is why they have to avoid them[83] appears to be a shallow etymological devise inadequate for historical interpretations. The *Abazigaba* connection to rain calling and the material culture of rouletted pottery would perhaps account for the origins of this specific *Bashambo* sub-clan in Igara. Sources from Kiziba and Rujumbura agree that the *Bashambo* are *Abalenge/Abarengye*,[84] a useful piece of evidence indicating that the *Bashambo* could have been rooted in the same general cultural stratum as that of the *Batundu* and the *Abazigaba*.

Mugasha was the *embandwa* spirit invoked by the *Abazigaba* rain callers as a medium to approach the Creator for the Karagwe old kingdom. Perhaps the persona *Mugasha* had been an early ruler of the *Abazigaba*, known as an *enfura* clan in Karagwe. *Omukama* E. Rukamba asserted that the *enfura* clans were "royal or semi-royal clans".[85] In

Ihangiro also the *Abazigaba* have earlier been a ruling clan.[86] So the *Abazigaba* in Karagwe could have been early kings, their successors retaining ritual control of rain calling in Karagwe as well as in Rusubi (Buzinza).[87] Mzee Joel Kakuba in Karagwe explained that *Mugasha* of the *Abazigaba* clan was the head of all the *embandwa* spirits in the *kikare*, regarded as grandfather, *ishenkuru*, of the Karagwe kings. A large tree, the *orwanga* or clan shrine of *Mugasha*, grew near Lake Mujunju below the hill of *Bweranyange*.

Mugasha is said to need the sacrifice of a black bull, called *ekimasha*, a black goat and a white cock.[88] It is interesting that Ehret (1998:308) marks the root of the here annotated term for the "black bull", *ekimasha*, **-masa*, as a Southern Cushitic loanword in Western Lakes meaning 'bull or cow that has not produced young'. Among the Rutara-speaking *Bahima* in Mbarara *ekimasha* is known as a young bull especially preserved for breeding.[89] Therefore, this term presupposing a socio-economic context of specialised herding could have been retained from the distant past, testifying to the physical presence of Southern Cushites as specialised pastoralists.

However, the origin of the persona *Mugasha* between the lakes is remembered in the connection with water communications. One version of the story about *Mugasha* becoming the spirit of the *Abazigaba* was told in Karagwe:

> *Mugasha* is said to have been a member of the *Abazigaba* clan, who went to look for a wife. On returning with his bride the couple had to cross a lake. In the middle of the lake a storm blew up and the boat filled with water and sank. *Mugasha* and his bride drowned. After his death *Mugasha* became *Omuzimu omunsi y'amaizi*, 'the spirit in the world of water'. His wife is also there.[90]

The veneration of the *Mugasha* spirit has spread far beyond the Karagwe location of "the man" *Mugasha*'s alleged *Abazigaba* clan affiliation. Mulokozi (1987:140) elaborates on the current widespread importance of *Mugasha*, "culture-hero of a group of nationalities comprising about 20 million people and extending into at least six different states– Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire". The central

shrine of *Mukasa*, the Luganda pronunciation of his name, is in Sesse islands, Buganda. Hurel (1911:79) had reported from Ukerewe that *Mugasa* was revered as the guardian of fish and everything in general that was found in the lake. The Bakerewe spend their lives fishing and travelling on the lake and every time they boarded a boat *Mugasa* had to be invoked. "His" spiritual impact prevails, but "his" power is not limited to the sphere of fishermen. Mulokozi stresses that the abiding power and influence of the culture hero *Mugasha/Mugasa/Mukasa* should be understood within the ecological context of "aquatic and other communities in the area". As the presumed ruler and controller of water and winds, rain and thunderstorms *Mugasha* "ultimately controls the productive activities, the civilisation and the very existence of the interlacustrine peoples" (1987:140).[91]

To the Bahaya of Kyamutwara the wife of *Mugasha*, *Nakalembe*, is the spirit of agriculture. *Nakalembe* is the spirit who possesses the *Baharambwa* of the *Batundu* clan, the leaders of women, when they start the cultivation season. Here *Nakalembe* is known as *Mugasha*'s wife, a spirit who has only one eye, one breast and one leg.[92] In Mulokozi's (1987:31) *nanga* epics from Buhaya, *Mugasha* is of the *Batundu* clan. Being a powerful spiritual manifestation of early ruling clans, kings and commoners alike depend on the benevolence of *Mugasha*. Nearly one hundred years ago Rehse (1910:128) observed "Mugasha-Bogen" at the court of the Kiziba king. The spirit of *Mugasha* still holds a prominent position in the *kikale* of Buhaya kings. *Omukama* E. Rukamba of Kyamutwara calls *Mugasha* "the king of the lake". Just as Rehse had observed for Kiziba, the house of *Mugasha*, *Nyaruju*, in Kyamutwara is bow-shaped, normally constructed in front on the right hand side of the entrance of the *kikale*:

> The house of *Mugasha* must be like that, because he lived without any restriction, coming and going as he pleased; he dwells in the waters and his is the sign of the rainbow, *omwangazima*.[93]

It is tempting to regard the culture-hero *Mugasha* as a symbol of the Bantu-speakers, who had spread throughout the region along lake shores and riverbanks by 500 AD (Schoenbrun 1990:187). Later Urewe-bearing sites reflect a rapid expansion of Great Lakes Bantu successor languages, the intermediate Western Lakes and West Nyanza.

Perhaps beliefs in *Mugasha* and the spiritual agent for iron-working, *Irungu*, arose in the context of cultural fusion and multilingual interactions documented in the shift to rouletted ceramics (McMaster, p.c. afore-mentioned). The influence of the culture hero *Mugasha* has persisted through time. For Burundi Celis and Nzikobanyanka (1976:104) recorded a case where the smith himself was said to be possessed by *Mugasa* during the forging process of *inyuundo* hammers.[94] The latter constitutes an iron production technique characteristic of the so-called Later or Recent Iron Age, whose inception has been deemed to coincide with the attested first occurrence of flexible rouletted pottery in the Great Lakes region after a. 700 AD (Desmedt 1991). Ehret (1998:49, Table 4, cf. 2001:164) has identified **-òndò/*-ùndò* 'hammer (of smith)' as a Central Sudanic loanword incorporated into proto-Mashariki (Proto-Eastern Bantu) communities during the early centuries of the last millennium BC.

Plate 5. **The Cultural Officer Ndugu Boas Kaitaba demonstrates the Karagwe metal work treasures, the ritual hammer, enyondo, to the left, in front**

Celis (1989) classified the various types of *inyuundo* found in Rwanda. Comparing the *"renge"*-type with the types of *inyuundo* that could be established for recent times, he observed that one of them (1989:31, Photo 3) differs in shape. It resembles certain dynastic hammers. This observation is interesting, because its basic form is similar to the ritual *enyondo* I found among the royal metal work treasures in Karagwe,[95] which means that also the Karagwe ritual *enyondo* can be of "renge" derivation. Desmedt (1991:182) remarked that, as far as she knew, the only object that resembles a *"renge"* implement outside Rwanda is a hammer/anvil that appears in Karagwe.[96] She (1991:182) proposed that iron-work objects of the *"renge"* type in Rwanda could have been

produced during the period she posits for rouletted ceramics of the twisted string-decorated type (group W in her terminology) around 800-1500 AD. In the wider perspective of south-western interlacustrine history, then, the *Abazigaba* in Karagwe could represent the same cultural stratum as the *Bareenge* in Rwanda.

The Bunyoro Centre of Creation: Origin Traditions Co-opted

The "grandparents" of kings notably of *Abazigaba*, who are related to iron-working in the southern parts of the region, had their counterparts in Bunyoro. Dynastic traditions in Bunyoro mention "the first kings", the *Abatembuzi*, as "grandparents" of the *Babito* kings (K.W. 1935:156-157). However, clan traditions which were not controlled from the centre link the *Batembuzi* dynasty to the first ruling clan in the country, the *Bagabo*. A much later context of political centralisation the *Babiito* dynastic historians must have co-opted early clan names into the *Batembuzi* genealogy.

The *Bagabo* clan name mentioned for the first settlers in Kitara traditions are accorded first-comer status here. Buchanan (1974:52-53) asserts that they were the *abasangwa*, those who were found in the land, their totem or group symbol being the crested crane. Buchanan (1974:58) maintains that the *Bagabo* are also connected to clans described as ironworkers. *Kitara* clan traditions equate the *Bagabo* clan with the *Batembuzi* dynasty, whose last king *Isaza* is recorded as the first *Omukama* to rule the country (Buchanan 1974:52). The name or title *Abatembuzi* derives from the verb **-tembul-*, 'to clear new land', which is an innovation Schoenbrun (1990: Table 4:12) dates to the time of the intermediate speech communities of West Nyanza of about 300-400 AD. The iron-working *Bagabu* clan could have been the first ruling clan in Bunyoro with first-comer status enshrined in their title *Abatembuzi*, 'those who cleared the land'. Buchanan concluded: "significantly, the idea of *mukama*-ship or centralized rule is ... linked to the *Bagabu*" (1974:60). However, *Hangi* could not have been called *Mukama*. The *Babiito* dynastic historians gave the royal title *Omukama* retrospectively to rulers who preceded the *Babiito*.

In the same way as early clan heads and famous ancestors in Buhaya were mentioned as *Abakama*, the title of *Mukama*, 'king', was used "in retrospect" by the oral historians Buchanan interviewed in Bunyoro. They called the first ancestors by a royal title that was used much later, a designation that was familiar and contemporary to the specific situation of oral performance. Thus it was natural for the storyteller to apply the term for centralised ruler-ship known to himself and the audience about the first prominent ancestors, who most probably were kings, although not called *Bakama*. Moreover, in a situation of oral performance, the "myth-maker" is given imaginative freedom to transport the listeners "from a more mundane level of perception of the reality around them" to a state of mind, "where they can grapple with the symbolic order of reality" (Okpewho 1983:74). In Bunyoro, then, those ancestors who were pioneers, *Abatembuzi*, became understood on a symbolic level of reality, when they were identified with the Creator. They were called by the names of the Creator. The political underpinning of this symbolism must be seen in the *Babiito* quest for legitimacy.

Many of the names in the *Batembuzi* genealogy recorded in Kitara court traditions are names of God, the Creator (Nyakatura 1973:5). As progenitors of the succeeding ruling *Babiito* dynasty, the *Batembuzi* pioneers in Kitara were called by names of the Creator. In court traditions of the old *Bahinda* kingdom of Nkore, just south of "the Kitara complex", the *Bacwezi* rulers descend from *Rugabo* (from **-gab-*) and *Ruhanga* (a form of *Hangi*, the first ancestor of the *Bagabo*) (Buchanan 1974:58). *Rugaba* and *Ruhanga* are names for God in Rutara languages, while the North Nyanza-speaking Basoga have *Lugaba*. Traditions transmitted in Karagwe relate that the *Bahinda* dynasty descended from the king of Bunyoro, who is mentioned as *Igaba* (Katoke 1975:23). The *Babiito* ruling dynasty connects itself to their predecessors the *Bagabo*, whom they gave names of the Creator, because they were understood as the originators of the whole idea of centralised rule. Therefore they had to be identified with God, *Rugaba*, one of the names of the Creator among the Rutara as well as the North Nyanza-speaking peoples.

"Igaba's" 'Drum Sons'"

A court tradition from Buhaya clarifies the dynastic claim that interlacustrine kingship originated in Bunyoro. The *Omukama* of Kyamutwara explained what he called "the deepest history"[97] of his people in the following way:

> *Igaba*, the king of Bunyoro, at that time known as *Kitara*, had failed to get an heir to the throne through his official wives, so he had to send for a famous diviner, *Kakara ka Shagama* from Igara. He instructed *Igaba* that instead of looking for a wife from inside the royal family he should change from that system and instead possess a woman from the indigenous population and the lowly and disregarded *Kamaranga* was found within the royal enclosure. Her name was *Kamaranga*, which refers to her low status only being allowed to drink *amaranga*, the last product in the churning process, discarded by cattle owners, but given to slaves and dogs. She used to help the milkers to collect the urine from the cows during milking with the purpose of preventing the urine from contaminating the milk. The urine would be used for hygienic purposes. Through the union with this woman of the people *Igaba* produced four children: *Shagama*, *Bagyendanwa*, *Nyabatamba* and *Kachwankizi*, just as *Kakara ka Shagama* had foretold. *Shagama* became the heir to the throne of Bunyoro, because he came out of the first blood of the woman. The others were sent out from there to rule other countries. Afterwards *Kamaranga* had to be given a royal name of being the wife of the king. That is how she got the name *Njunaki*, which means 'she had produced children for the world'. And that is why they say: *Akazalira engoma nka Njunaki,* 'she gave birth to the drum like *Njunaki*' about anybody who gives birth to many children.[98]

What the *Omukama* called the "deepest history", relates that the king of *Kitara*, *Igaba*, spread kingship among Rutara-speaking peoples between the lakes. The story takes the form of an origin myth. The perception that *Kitara* is the source of origin is expressed in the name *Shagama*, 'blood', given to the first-born son conceived "out of the first blood of the woman". Procreation is enacted through divine intervention, the diviner himself known as *ka Shagama*, 'of blood'. In the context of clan origins in Buhaya, J. Kibira (1974:18) has shown that blood was traditionally regarded as intimately being connected with the genesis of human beings, existential questions of life and creation.

Igaba's three following children, *Bagyendanwa*, *Nyabatamba* and *Kachwankizi* are the names for ruling drums regarded as sacred symbols of kingship in kingdoms claiming origin in Bunyoro. *Bagyendanwa* empowered the *Abahinda* dynasty in Nkore; *Nyabatamba*, more commonly known as *Nyabatama*, was the royal drum of the *Bahinda* rulers in Karagwe. *Kachwankizi* drum of the Kiziba kingdom, which is ruled by a branch of the *Babiito* royal clan, connects their rulers to *Igaba*. From the perspective of the Bahaya court historians this tradition, in the form of an origin myth, conveys the belief that Bunyoro was perceived as a centre of creation. Mythical time transcends historical time, because "the deepest history" here does not take place in a time "before all history", as Eliade perhaps made us believe. However, the semantic field of *-gab-*, 'to give, divide, distribute', in for example *Igaba* and *Rugaba* takes us back to the earliest layer of kingship in the region.

The *-gab-* Kingship

The meaning of the root *-gab-*, 'to give, divide up, distribute', is associated with leadership and kingship in all the three Great Lakes Bantu successor language groups: Rutara, West Highlands and North Nyanza (cf. Schoenbrun 1994-1995:276). "... roughly speaking, the larger the territory covered by a cultural trait, the older the trait itself," said Sapir (1916:28). Here follows a comparative examination of the wide but uneven distribution of the *Ba-gabo* and associated clans, variations of their symbolic representations (totems) and details about the nature of their court duties.

Reflecting on the clan affiliation of *Isaza*, the last *Mutembuzi*, Gorju (1920:42) wrote that he belonged to the *Bagabo* clan respecting the *entuha*, 'crested crane' totem. Gorju notes that the *Bagabo* clan still existing at the time of his observations among the Banyoro had different symbolic representations, one of which is the tail-less cow, *enkira* (cf. Roscoe 1923a:16). A scrutiny of Cory and Hartnoll's (1945) clan list reveals that there are two kingdoms in Buhaya (Kiziba and Missenye), where the *Bagabo* clan has retained the crested crane totem (App.V:3). Moreover, in Kianja it is the *Bakaija* clan that respects the *entuwa* as secondary totem (App. V:13). For Buhaya *Omukama* E. Rukamba

asserts that the first ruler is called *omwija*.[99] *Bakaija* is plural of *omwija*, so this clan name appears as a straightforward reference to the kings who came first. Their influence is still recognised in Kianja. The *Bakaija* of the *entuwa* totem together with the *Bayango* are reported as king-makers; their hereditary duty at court entailed the responsibility for naming the king at accession rituals in Kianja.

Importantly, the *Bakaija* of Kianja are said to have migrated from Rwanda (Cory and Hartnoll 1945, App.V:13). Schoenbrun (1997:153) annotates *umusàámbi*, 'the crowned crane' [*Balearica Regulorum*], as the totem of the royal clan in Rwanda, the *Banyiginya*. The information I had taken down from a meeting with *Umwami* Kigeli V Ndahindurwa in Nairobi about his regal totem the "crowned" crane did not attract my full attention until I shared it with Mary McMaster.[100] Then Schoenbrun (1997:153) notes the possibility of tying the root of the Kinyarwanda term for "crowned" crane, *-samb-*, to the *emi-samb-wa*, spirits that in Rutara and North Nyanza have been identified as spirits of the first owners of the soil. As has been demonstrated above the same semantic association can be tied to the name of the first ruling clan, the *Bashambwe*, in the two Buhaya kingdoms of Ihangiro and Kyamutwara.

The exposition of the evidence at hand has shown that the Banyoro and the Bahaya link the *entuha/entuwa* totem to the *Bagabo*. The Banyoro are explicit about their perception of *Bagabo* as first on the land, *Abatembuzi*, a name that may refer not only to those who cleared the land but also to their kings. According to Cory and Hartnoll's clan list the *Bakaija* came from Rwanda to Kianja in Buhaya bringing their regal totem of kingship, the "crowned" crane. It follows that the first kings in Rwanda can have been among the first owners of the soil, who later passed on the "crowned crane" totem to the *Banyiginya* dynasty. Naturally, kings had to be blessed by the former owners of the soil. The same symbolic representation was endowed upon the *Bahinda* dynasty of Nkore,[101] but here the term is different: *entúúha*, in Taylor's

(1959:158) translation 'crested crane',[102] a variation in pronunciation/spelling of *entuwa*, noted for Buhaya.

So far, our investigation of the "crowned crane" totem in relation to first-comer clans has demonstrated the incidence of two different terms, the Rutara *entúúha/entuwa* for Bunyoro, Buhaya and Nkore and the West Highlands *umusàámbi* for Rwanda. Attention now turns to the third one, namely *Ngali* [ŋŋ*aalí*] of the North Nyanza. The connecting link is the tail-less cow totem, *enkira*.

Gorju's (1920:42) remark that the *Bagabo* in Bunyoro respect the tail-less cow, *enkira*, and not the crested crane noted for *Isaza* is a piece of information that can open up the regional scenario of possible early historical interactions. Cory and Hartnoll (1945, App. V:3) annotates the tail-less cow as the primary totem of the *Bagabo* in the tiny kingdom of Bugabu, north-eastern Buhaya. The *enkira* totem does not only involve a cow that is tail-less. I was told that *enkira* is a term used for everything which is tail-less including the frog, an animal that definitely has no tail. So the *Bahunga* in Karagwe may be placed in the tail-less totem category of clans. Their primary totem is "everything tail-less", while their secondary is the frog (Cory and Hartnoll 1945, App. V:9). It is important to note that *Bahunga* clan officials are partly responsible for royal burials in Karagwe.[103] Continuity from the first owners of the soil appears to be ritually perpetuated by officials respecting the *enkira*, 'everything tail-less' early kingship totem. The *Bahunga* in Karagwe share the *enkira* totem with the *Abeega* in Rwanda.[104] The *Abeega* are known as one of the noble clans that give their daughters in marriage to the *Umwami* (Hertefelt and Coupez 1964:454). The logic behind this custom seems obvious. Representing early kingship the *Abeega* daughters link the *Banyiginya* dynasty to the soil of the land in Rwanda.

Worthy of noting is the fact that the *Ente* clan members in the neighbouring Buganda appear to share historical roots with the *Bagabo* in Buhaya. In Buganda they identify themselves in terms of their main symbolic representation, "*Ente*, the Tail-less cow", but their "second totem" is the "Crested Crane, *Ngali*" [ŋŋ*aalí*] (Roscoe 1911:139). Each of the Baganda clans would perform a drumbeat, *omubala* as another sign of identification. The words that accompany the *omubala* of the

Plate 6. Muganda clan drummer

Ente clan refer to the skill of iron working.[105] For Buhaya Cory and Hartnoll (1945, App.V:3) list three instances of *Bagabo* responsibility as royal spear makers, a fourth as blacksmiths. We have already explored the *Bagabo* connection to iron working in Bunyoro.

Cory and Hartnoll (1945, App. V:3) recorded that the *Bagabo* in the Missenye kingdom of Buhaya, situated north of the Kagera river, respect the crested crane as their secondary totem. In the column for subclans, *mahiga*, the same source has the name *Katongole*. This piece in the jigsaw is interesting, because it connects the *Bagabo* of Missenye in Buhaya to the *Ente* clan in Buganda. Buchanan (1974:58) noted that *Katongole* is recorded in Buganda traditions as a smith, who founded the *Ente* clan. The *Katongole* hereditary title is still retained. In 1993, at the installation of *Kabaka* Ronald Mwenda Mutebi II, it was *Katongole* of the *Ente* clan, who performed the ritual role of bringing the white bull-calf in front of the *Kabaka*. The iron implement, with which the king-maker *Ssemanobe* directed the *Kabaka* to poke the white bull-calf, mirrors the craft of iron-working inherent to the *Katongole* hereditary clan leadership. When the *Kabaka* touched the white bull-calf he was said to symbolically kill "the white cow[106] to feed the Baganda". Herein lies the basic meaning of interlacustrine kingship. As will be amply shown in following chapters, the most important task of the king is to "feed" his people, *ku-gab-ira*, 'to divide up, distribute' the assets of the kingdom among his subjects.

The origin of the semantic field of *-gab-* and its symbolic associations in relation to kingship appear to be ancient in the region. Iron-working clans of first-comer status, in Rutara-speaking people's communities accounted for the above called *Bagabo*, have been symbolically identified by a regal adaptation from the environment, the "crowned" crane. Each of the three Great Lakes Bantu successor languages has developed separate terms for the "crowned" crane, a fact that argues for antiquity. The West Highlands *umusàámbi* appears to share semantic field with the root of the term for spirit of first-comer clans, *-samb-*. The problem is pronunciation: the latter has a short "*a*". Whatever we can make of it, the term *Bakaija* for "the first kings" in the Buhaya kingdom of Kianja coupled with the information that "they came from Rwanda", is instructive on the general awareness of historical regional interactions.

Table 3. Distribution of "crowned" crane and "tail-less" totems

Kingdom	Clan	Totem	Second totem	Associated names
RUTARA				
Bunyoro	Bagabo	*entuha*		Isaza
		'crested crane'		
Bunyoro	Bagabo	*enkira* 'tail-less cow'		
Kiziba	Bagabo		crested crane	
Missenye	Bagabo		crested crane	Katongole
Kianja	Bakaija "first kings"		'a crane' *entuwa*	
Nkore	Bahinda		*entuha* 'crested crane'	
Bugabo	Bagabo	tail-less cow		
Karagwe	Bahunga	*enkira* 'everything tail-less'		

WEST HIGHLANDS				
Rwanda	Banyiginya	*umusàámbi* 'crowned crane'		
Rwanda	Abeega	*enkira* 'everything tail-less'		
NORTH NYANZA				
Buganda	*Ente* 'tail-less cow'	ŋŋ*aali* 'crested crane'		Katongole

Another totem reported for *Bagabo* clans in Bunyoro and the Buhaya kingdom of Bugabu is the *enkira*, 'everything tail-less'. According to available sources other clan names than the *Bagabo* in Rutara-speaking peoples' old kingdoms have been associated with the *enkira*. There are the *Bahunga* in Karagwe, whose totem is *enkira*. West Highlands-speakers of Rwanda, the *Abeega*, also hold the *enkira* in respect. The same is true for the *Ente*, 'Tail-less cow' clan in Buganda, whose additional symbolic representation the crested crown here takes on an altogether different term, ŋŋ*aali*. Only in Buganda the totems of the tail-less cow and the crested crane seem to coincide. The symbolism of "tail-less" is conceptualised in a totem associated with clans of all the three Great Lakes Bantu successor languages, among Rutara-speakers named *Ba-gab-o*. Schoenbrun (1997:113-116) has demonstrated that the etymology of the root *-gab-*, 'to give, distribute', is Great Lakes Bantu. His account of the elaboration of the *-gab-* panoply of terms shows its significance from family to state level in all the three successor languages.

The meaning of the ritual surrounding the "white cow", *ente elikwera*, that "the smith" *Katongole* of the "tail-less cow" brought in front of the just enthroned *Kabaka* can be interpreted in the context of ancient kingship redistribution principles expressed in the *-gab-* terminology. According to my sources[107] the Banyarwanda include whiteness also in the semantic field of

-gab-. *Inka ingabe* refers to a special cow in the herd. It was said to be pure white and praised as "the queen of the herd".[108] Therefore, the symbol of the white cow in relation to kingship appears to be as old as the "crowned crane". The development of three completely different terms of this regal adaptation from the environment argues for antiquity.

Concluding Remarks

A realistic reconstruction of religion and history in the interlacustrine region must be subject to terminology, which is meaningful from the clan-based system of the peoples concerned. It has been necessary to determine the nature of the interrelationships between God, spirits and human beings. "Spirits should not be described as small gods; they are not, because they are created," said an important representative of Buhaya. God is praised through a multitude of names descriptive of what "he" does. The conclusion is that before Christianity and other religions were introduced, the interlacustrine peoples believed in one God, who was both transcendent and at a distance while at the same time being immanent and close. When sickness, infertility, famine or death threatened the normal state of peace and wellbeing in a family, clan or state, *businge*, the cause for unrest had to be sought. Different priests and mediums could approach their spiritual superiors, believing that they would in turn approach the Creator on their behalf. A general guideline for interpretation of interlacustrine historical development is the conviction found in Buhaya and Karagwe clan contexts that the more powerful a person was in life, the more powerful he/she became as a spirit.

To the people in the Great Lakes region the activities of the Creator as the "Giver" and "Moulder" of life are realities and they perceive of every new clan settlement as a new creation. A Muganda expert mentioned the *emisambwa* spiritual manifestations as "the first creation". Today the term *emisambwa* refers to clan spirits, a term geographically confined to areas around the shores of Victoria Nyanza. Those are the spirits of the *abasangwa*, the first owners of the soil, and the influence they exerted on their descendants can not be overestimated. They are believed

to appear in the form of fierce animals, especially lions, leopards and snakes guarding the interests of those who were first on the land. The term *omusambwa* is estimated to have been well established by a. 500 AD (Schoenbrun 1994-1995:280).

In languages spoken by Rutara and West Highlands communities of the grasslands in the interior there is no *omusambwa* clan belief terminology. Here the belief in powerful spiritual manifestations of lions, leopards and snakes generally apply to the context of kingship. Lions, leopards or snakes were and are still perceived as spirits of kings incarnate, who protect not only kings and the graves of their ancestors but the complete territory of the kingdom. The idea which validates this perception is that no king could rule without the blessing and protection of the first owners of the soil, blessings being transferred by spiritual agencies in fierce animal forms. An investigation of available sources demonstrates that the incidence of the belief pattern occurs more consistently in West Highlands-speakers' old kingdoms than among Rutara-speakers.

Rutara-speakers deviate from the general pattern accounted for. These are the kingdoms along the shores of Victoria Nyanza, which are known to have retained the *emishambwa* clan belief terminology, at the same time beliefs in kings' spiritual manifestations in snake form are reported. Even in the Buhaya kingdoms along the lakeshores, whose economies are based on perennial agriculture, milk is documented as the ritual medium of transformation. Records for two Buhaya kingdoms mention the name *Ba-shambw-e* as the first dynasty to rule the country. This coincidence of clan and kingship terminology is an indication of the powerful spiritual manifestations. These are today referred to as clan *emishambwa*, which in the remote past could have been perceived as spirits of kings.

The symbolic representation of the "crowned" crane as a regal adaptation from the environment has been documented in the languages of all the three Great Lakes Bantu successor languages; Rutara: *entuha*, West Highlands: *umusàámbi* and North Nyanza: ŋŋ*aali*. Different terms for a similar concept signal that the first owners of the

soil could have been kings. This would be a powerful indication that kingship symbolism precedes linguistic diversification in the region. Significantly, already during the Great Lakes Bantu period ca. 500 BC to ca. 100 AD the linguistic evidence supports the emergence of a new term, which designates inherited political leadership, **-ami*. Until then there had been only one level of leadership, expressed in a term derived from the verb **-kum-*, 'to become honoured', involving leadership in both political and spiritual areas. The function inherent to the old word **-kumu*, 'chief', now came to embrace the immaterial world, as expressed in the current *-pfumu/-fumu*, 'diviner, healer' for West Highlands and Rutara speech communities. The West Highlands-speakers have retained the term *Umwami* as a royal title. The *Banyiginya* of Rwanda and the *Bahinda* of Nkore are the only former ruling clans who seem to have inherited the "crowned" crane totem. Subsequently, when the politicians of the modern nation of Uganda adopted the crested crane as a national symbol, they drew on regional kingship symbolism, which originated in the remote past.

While *Isaza* of the *Bagabo* first comer clan in "Kitara" is said to have been of the "crowned" crane totem, the *Bagabo* in Bunyoro today have adopted another totem: the tail-less cow. A clan of the tail-less/frog complex of totems in Karagwe has retained important functions at court. In Rwanda *Abeega* daughters of the same symbolic representation link the king in marriage to the first owners of the soil. The observation, derived from within the logic of the sources themselves, is important for a more contextual understanding of the role of women in relation to kingship.

The Baganda accord another important role to the "smith" *Katongole*, the *Ente* clan leader, who respects the "crowned" crane also. By virtue of his hereditary office *Katongole* brought the white cow to the presence of the newly enthroned *Kabaka* on behalf of his ancestors, who were the first owners of the soil of the earth. When the *Kabaka* ritually poked "the white cow" using an iron implement, he did so as a tangible sign of accession to power. Enshrined in the *-gab-* kingship ideology lies the king's fundamental duty to redistribute the assets of the kingdom. This principle is suggested to be a legacy of Bantu-speaking

peoples' culture of inherited leadership. The theme of "the white cow" reoccurs among the Banyarwanda, who expose it within the semantic field of *-gab-*: *inka ingabe*, praised as "the queen of the herd".

Therefore, evidence from North Nyanza and West Highland-speaking communities connects the symbol of "the white cow" with kingship. The links can be symbolically associated with the first owners of the soil. The North Nyanza Baganda understand "the white cow" as a bull, identified in terms of tail-lessness. When cattle multiplied, "the white cow" was designed in the shape of a female. The ritual practice whereby the life-giving milk was utilised as a medium to transform the king's spirit into a fierce animal shape, e.g. lions and leopards, presupposed a plentiful supply of milk. Variations of the milk ritual have been documented for West Highlands-speakers and several Rutara-speaking folk of the old kingdoms. The evidence of Rutara-speakers' prevalence of the above-mentioned milk ritual exposes two noteworthy exceptions. In Bunyoro and Tooro, apparently under Luo cultural influence, the belief in the king's spiritual transformation into a fierce animal shape was later replaced by another belief pattern related to the *Bacwezi* and the *embandwa* spirit mediumship cult. No doubt because the *Babiito* could not rule without the blessing of the first owners of the soil, the Creator, *Ruhanga*, placed the spirits, *Bacwezi*, in the soil of the earth, the hills of Bunyoro. In Chapter nine enough details will be given to substantiate the claim that the *Bacwezi* belief pattern originated as a vehicle for spirits of *Babiito* kings. A court tradition told in Buhaya here accounts for and testifies to the belief that kingship originated in Bunyoro. Hence it was perceived as a "centre of creation".

The examination of available sources indicates that kingship symbolism already from the time of the first owners of the soil is associated with power and the control of iron working. In the southern areas of the region, among Rutara and West Highland-speakers, the "grandparents of kings", the *Abatundu* and the *Abazigaba*, have been identified as important early iron working clans, whose influence are ritually retained at court. *Mugasha* and *Irungu*, spiritual representatives of these clans, are accorded the status as protectors of fishing and

hunting, iron working and agriculture. The *Abazigaba* in Rwanda are also mentioned in the context of the first who tamed and milked cattle. A cross-examination of clan networks link the *Bareenge* in Rwanda to the same general cultural stratum as that of the *Batundu* and of the *Abazigaba*.

In Karagwe sources the rituals performed to satisfy the needs of *Mugasha* exhibit a cattle terminology, *ekimasha*, diagnostic of Southern Cushitic physical presence, understood to be specialised herders in the distant past. But Karagwe rain calling rituals at court, which evoke *Mugasha* are made efficient in beer by means of a symbolic fish, *rugata*. This term associates to the material culture of rouletted pottery of suggested Central Sudanic origin. A culture hero deeply rooted in the region, perhaps *Mugasha* epitomises Bantu-speakers' verbalisation of the very process of cultural and social fusion.

The period of shared developments may have commenced a. 300 AD. The intermediate Western Lakes and West Nyanza would still have been mutually intelligible, if the linguistic evidence analysed by McMaster (Forthcoming) is correct. It is reasonable to suggest that Bantu-speaking peoples' culture of inherited leadership was the uniting factor, because historical linguistic research had shown that from a. 800 AD Bantu speech prevailed (Schoenbrun 1997:206). The progress in this field should leave no-one in doubt regarding the Central Sudanic contribution to valuable insights of the smelting processes that early ruling clans controlled. The key term for advanced metallurgy, **-òndò/*-ùndò*, 'hammer (of smith)', is attributed to Central Sudanic influences, which the first Bantu-speaking groups encountered in their migration into the Great Lakes region.

The analysis from an inside "religious vision" of the peoples concerned has shown that the interlacustrine belief system constitutes a useful methodological tool to the interpretation of history. The overall principle in this respect is the belief in God, the Creator. Thus history has been described in terms of a continuously progressing Creation, the formation of settlements and states ultimately attributed to God, the Creator. The *Babiito* state ideologists in Bunyoro linked themselves to

the first owners of the soil, the pioneering *Batembuzi*, whom they gave names of the Creator. As will be demonstrated in the last chapter, the *Bacwezi* belief pattern arose in the cultural context of the Luo/Bantu borderlands under the auspices of the Bunyoro "centre of creation".

Attention will now be given to an investigation of the role of the king. Mediums and diviners interpret the *Bacwezi* spiritual guidance that controls political decision-making in Rutara-speaking peoples' kingdoms between the lakes.

Endnotes

1 Kyamutwara: *Omukama* E. Rukamba, Pocket Notebook 2:81-84, 1991.

2 Bugufi: Mzee Daniel Semuguruka, BFFM:476, 1991.

3 Bunyoro: *Kibandwa wa Ngobya*, priest of Ngobya spirit, Venance Byaruhanga, BFFM:998, 1992.

4 Information from Prof. Byaruhanga-Akiiki, Makerere University, 30/11 1992.

5 Information in Kampala from Mr John Twinomusinguzi, Pocket Notebook 6:28, 1997.

6 Ta Elias Lugimbana, born in Buhaya, information given in Bushangaro, Karagwe 1976.

7 Although Roscoe in essence seems to have understood that to the peoples of the Great Lakes there was but one God, the Creator, in line with the racist perspective of his time, nowhere in his writings did this insight bear any consequences for the terminology he used. For example he mentioned another Kinyoro name for God, *Enkya*, as a "subordinate god" to *Ruhanga* (1923a:21).

8 The Basoga have a special name for the creator as "tuner": *Nabamba* (Lubandi 1978:110).

9 Buganda: Information from the incumbent bodyguard, jester and priest of the Kabaka, Kiwanuka Ntambi za Mukama, communicated and translated by Mr Ronnie Sessanga, BFFN/8:81-82, 1994.

10 P.c. from Dr Mwamula-Lubandi, Anthropologist from Busoga, Uppsala 12/3 1998.

11 Information from Ma Kambabazi, Ahakishaka 1978.

12 However, *Ruhanga a-ku-kuume* can be used by revivalists (*Abarokole*) in Busoga (information from Dr E.D. Mwamula Lubandi, Uppsala, 17/9 1998) and in Ankore (Deputy Head of Mission, The Embassy of the Republic of Uganda, Mr Francis Katana, Copenhagen, information of the 9/10 1998).

13 Regarding the Rutara-speakers other than the Banyambo (and the Bahaya), which will shortly be elucidated, see for example Beattie (1964:128) for the Banyoro, Kahimbaara (1974:27) for the Batooro, B.K. Taylor (1962:110) for the Banyankore and the Bakiga (ibid:125). Mworoha (1987:198) has it for the West Highlands Barundi speech community.

14 See de Heusch (1966:160-162) for a discussion of the term. Etymologically *amagara* is the *Runyankore/Rukiga* word for 'life' (Taylor 1959:172). *Amagara* is a term that Schoenbrun (1997:248) treats under the heading of "Philosophy". It is basically related to life, force or strength and its distribution covers Rutara and West Highland-speaking communities. *Oburora* is the common word for 'life' in Runyambo and Luhaya.

15 The Rwandan University professor Manarigaba Balibutsa developed this "bantuist" perspective in his work *Les perspectives de la pensée philosophique bantu rwandaise après Alexis Kagame* (1985).

16 For the Bazinza Bjerke (1981:133) defines the normal state in which men live as a state of order.

17 Snoxall (1967:205) has *mirembe* in Luganda.

18 When family members were sick or when the wife had had miscarriage our neighbour in Ahakishaka would complain saying "we have no peace" (*emilembe*, Luhaya, *mahoro*, Kinyarwanda/Runyankore) (Farelius 1978:28).

19 In his comparative study treating the problem of healing in Central and Southern Africa Janzen (1992:64) states that health "is defined by numerous metaphors including ... 'coolness', whose most widespread cognate is *pód*, 'to become cool or cool down' or 'to become well, healthy'". This is in contrast to the heat of disease or witchcraft. *Mahoro*, the Kinyarwanda term for peace would be derived from *kuhora*, 'to cool down'.

20 Information from Prof. Katoke, Notes from Karagwe II:127, 1991, T. Rushambira, BFFM:22, 1991.

21 A Karagwe elder in the line of clan officials at the court of *Omukama* Rumanyika ascertained that as a sign of peace, *obusinge*, the king used to move with a white sheep, *entama* (T. Rushambira. BFFM:21-22, 1991).

22 The old *Muhima* man who was *omufumu gw'enkoko* opened a young cock and read the intestines of the fowl.

23 Ma Kambabazi was *omufumu gw'emwani*, diviner in coffee beans. She would spit on the coffee beans before putting them in a clay pot (she had made herself) full of water. Then she stirred the mixture. She interpreted the pattern formed by the coffee beans when the water stilled. Spitting is used ritually as a blessing. The *embandwa* in Ahakishaka was reported to have blessed a small child brought for consultation by spitting, an occasion recorded by our cook, Ta Valentin, in 1975 (cf. for example Roscoe 1923a:26 for the Banyoro). Interpreting the historical role of the *Bacwezi* as priests, Tantala (1989:290) stressed the etymology of the word *Bacwezi* from *kucwera*, 'to spit'.

24 Ma Kyabona, the *embandwa*, 'priest' or 'medium', living in our village along the mountain ridge was also a skilful diviner in cowrie shells, *ensimbi*. The white cowry shells were thrown in a special way, the meaning divined from the way they fall in relation to one another.

25 See Bjerke (1981) for a detailed description of most aspects of the belief system of the Bazinza, including all relevant terminology in the local language. Bjerke also has an overview of *Bacwezi/embandwa/emandwa/imandwa* spiritual manifestations for the region (1975:28-42).

26 Information from Ma Maria Kambabazi given in Ahakishaka, Karagwe, 1975.

27 The translation is mine, more close to the original Luhaya than to Father Césard's French version.

28 For Rujumbura, north Kigezi, G.T. Mishambi pointed out that in individual cases of *kurumbira*, 'spirit affliction', sickness was believed to emanate from spirits of dead relatives, *emizimu*, for example a maternal uncle. He made the distinction between the individual *emizimu* and the communal *emandwa* (Runyankore/Rukiga), a differentiation he thought is not very clear to ordinary people but should be clarified for intellectual purposes (BFFN/6:106-107, 1993). Thus local variations of the most common terminology for "communal" spirit/priest or medium are rendered as follows. RUTARA: Runyoro, *embandwa* or *mucwezi*; Runyambo/Luhaya, *embandwa* or *mucwezi*; Runyankore/Rukiga, *emandwa*; WEST HIGHLANDS: Kinyarwanda, *imandwa*. For NORTH NYANZA-speaking Baganda, on the other hand, there are two different terms for spirit and priest or medium. Schoenbrun (1997:178) gives *lubaale* as the spirit that possesses the *emmandwà* priest/medium.

29 This was in an interview with Dr Cecilia Pennacini in May 1995, communicated to this author.

30 Karagwe: According to Karagwe tradition, in the past when there was enough milk available, the king's body was laid in a boat, *obwato*, and immersed in milk mixed with honey. One maggot that developed from the decomposing corpse would drink of the milk and subsequently turn into a lion. The lion would leap from the boat and disappear into the wilderness. At the following new moon that specific lion would appear in the shrine of the kingship drum, *Kagondo*, where it was said to join the lions of the royal ancestors, *ebinyagashani*, the lions that

were believed to harbour the spirits of the former kings (Mzee Matayo Rwemburara, Notes from Karagwe I:24, 1975, Mzee J. Kakuba, BFFM:128, 1991, cf. Katoke 1975:67). Roscoe (1923b:54) reported from Nkore that the fluid from the decomposing body being dried over slow fire was collected in a container and mixed with milk. Out of the grubs that developed one was selected by the priest, who took it to the sacred forest and brought back a lion cub. In Rwanda (Pages 1933:518) one maggot that came out from the right hand of the corpse was placed in a jug of milk and said to develop into a leopard. For Bugufi Mzee D. Semuguruka (BFFN/5:17) asserted that one maggot from the corpse was placed in milk and then turned into a python. For Kyamutwara *Omukama* E. Rukamba related that one maggot from the head of the decomposing corpse would be placed in a small *obwato*, 'wooden trough', with milk, people keep on watching until the *enkorantima*, 'python' appears. Then the successor can be installed because the spirit of the father is released (BFFN/2:42-43, 1991). Similar ritual procedures seem to have applied for Kianja (Rev. M. Luthosha, BFFN/5:77), Ihangiro, Maruku and Bugabo (Mwalimu Yazidi Makora BFFN/5:139-141).

31 Karagwe: Ta Matayo Rwemburara, Notes from Ahakishaka 1975:24 and *Kinyanyengoma* Bachorobekwa, BFFM:89, 1991; Nkore: Roscoe 1907:101, Mzee I. Katuuka, BFFM:583, 1992 and Rev. J.W. Kashaka, BFFM:600, 1992; Igara: Mzee G.W. Binyindo, BFFM:646, 1992 and Mzee B.K. Mubangizi, BFFM:655, 1992 and Rujumbura: Mzee Ph. Kitaburaza and Rev. I. Ndihimbirwe, BFFM:676, 1992.

32 Rusubi: *Omukama* Kasusura, BFFM:436, 1991. The Bazinza of Rusubi have close historical relationships with Karagwe. According to Bjerke (1981:1) they are sedentary subsistence hoe-cultivators, but they kept cattle in the past.

33 Karagwe: *Kinyanyengoma* Bachorobekwa, BFFM:89, 1991.

34 Bugufi: Mzee D. Semuguruka, BFFN/5:16-17, 1992, Heru (Buha): *Mwami* Theresa Ntare, Ufipa: *Mwene* L.P. Dantes Ngua, BFFN/5:164, 1992.

35 Heru: *Mwami* Theresa Ntare, BFFN/5:165, 1991. For the neighbouring kingdom of Manyovu-Ujiiji (Buha), Tripe (1939:22) reported that the king's spirits took the shape of lions, while the priests (*Wateko*) reincarnated in the form of pythons.

36 Karagwe: *Kinyanyengoma* Bachorobekwa revealed that in the *kikare* there were lions, leopards and snakes, who were said not to attack people unless the king ordered them to do so. Neither was it possible to kill them (BFFM:89, 1991).

37 Buhaya: Mwalimu Y. Makora, BFFN/5:141, 1991.

38 Mwalimu Y. Makora for Kyamutwara, Ihangiro, Maruku, Bugabo and Kianja, BFFN/5:140-141, 1991. Makora said that the kings of Kiziba, whose spirits were believed to reappear into puff-adders, *empiri*, were buried in a boat that was carried to Kitara, a geographic location defined as Missenye or beyond the river, *buseli* (BFFN/5:138, 1991).

39 Kianja: Rev. M. Lutosha, BFFN/5:98, 1991.

40 From the perspective of the Bahaya the jawbone, *orushaya*, is a substitute for the whole skull (Mwalimu Y. Makora, BFFN/5:140, 1991).

41 Buganda: Godfrey Kaaya Kavuma, BFFN/8:78, 1994.

42 Buganda: Notes from the installation of *Kabaka* Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II, 31/7 1993, BFFN/8:5.

43 We note the fact that the same term, *omukongozzi*, applies for *lubaale* spirit possession/initiation rituals in Buganda. The *omulaguzi*, 'diviner' is also *omusamize* when he/she is possessed by *lubaale*, then also acting as *omukongozzi*, perceived as carrying the *lubaale* on his/her shoulders (L.B. Kaggwa and Welbourn 1964:218).

44 Bunyoro: *Omubiitokati* M. Burara Atwoki, BFFM:937-939, 1992.

45 Bunyoro: *Omubiitokati* M. Burara Atwoki, BFFM:951-952, 1992.

46 Tooro: Information from Princess Mabel Komuntale, London, February 2004.

47 Tooro: Information given in Kampala by the late *Omukama* Patrick Kaboyo Olimi II in 1995.

48 Pajule: Mr Olanya Eugenio, BFFM:1072-1073, 1993.
49 Pajule: Mr Ventorino Too, BFFM:1079, 1993.
50 Bunyoro: *Kibandwa wa Ngobya* Venance Byaruhanga, BFFM:998, 1992.
51 Buganda: Mr D. Ronnie Sessanga Mukubira, BFFN/8:68, 71, 1993.
52 Kyamutwara: *Omukama* E. Rukamba confirmed that the "the *Batundu* is a very old and important clan, *oruganda rukuru muno*, they were rulers ...", BFFN/2:4, 1991.
53 Karagwe: Prof. Katoke, BFFN/4:1, 1991.
54 Ihangiro: Rev. S. Kahakwa, BFFM:384, 1991.
55 *Mugerwa* occurs as a personal name in Buganda, a fact that testifies to the close interactions between Luhaya-speaking Rutarans and North Nyanza Luganda-speakers.
56 Cory and Hartnoll 1945, Appendix V:29-30.
57 Kyamutwara: *Omukama* E. Rukamba, BF Pocket Notebook 2:73-74, 1991.
58 Karagwe: Information from Ma Konstantia Kyabona, *embandwa* in Ahakishaka, 31/10 1978.
59 Cory and Hartnoll 1945, Appendix V:42, F.1. Col.8, cf. Schmidt 1997:92.
60 Katoke's monograph on the Karagwe kingdom (1975) has interesting information about hereditary duties for the state that had to be performed by certain important clans. See especially Appendix C.
61 The Banyoro were also reported to use the term *okuiga* for "rain making" (Williams 1938-39:100, cf. *Omubiito* Isaya Karubanga, BFFM:910, 1992). However, the term *rain-caller* is used in the article on the "Great Lakes region, 1500-1800" prepared for UNESCO's General History of Africa V by Webster, Ogot and Chretien (1992). I think it is a much more appropriate word than "rain-maker", because it reflects better the local meaning the people themselves attach to the term *okuiga enjura*.
62 Information in Cory and Hartnoll 1945:39, note 5, states that before the king's house was built in Kiziba, they had to erect a model house on the head of a member of the Bawende clan.
63 Kyamutwara: *Omukama* E. Rukamba, BFFM:157-159, 1991.
64 Newbury (1980:398) proposed that the *Renge* identity in western Rwanda could have been "submerged within the Singa supra-clan identity with earlier Renge autonomy represented only by their claim to former 'royal' status". That royal status would not have fallen within the *Hutu-Tutsi* dichotomy, it was simply identified as *Renge* (cf. Hertefeldt 1971:24, note 12). For Rwanda in Kampala Rose Kantarama (BFFM:705, 1995) told Mary Uwera that the totem of the *Basiinga* clan is *Inka y'amanya*, 'a cow with spots or dots, especially white mixed with black'. She explained that the same concept holds for the *ente engobe* [striped cow] totem in Ankole. Then she made the following significant comment: "The *Basiinga* are not among the royal clans, it is a clan of its own", a distinction indicating that the origin of the *Basiinga* should be sought in the regional context of an agripastoralist, pre-social stratification type of community. For more information about the *Bareenge* see for example de Heusch (1982) and Schoenbrun (1998:229-230, 260-262).
65 Rwanda: Mzee Gacinya and Mzee Muyombane, BFFM:711, 1992.
66 Rwanda: Translation quoted from a research report by Butare Dismas, BFFM:700, 1992.
67 Rwanda: Mzee Kajanja, BFFM:731, 1992.
68 Rwanda: Butare Dismas, BFFM:700, 1992.
69 Information from Prof. I. Katoke, 10/9 1991, in Lukajange, Karagwe. In his article on the Bazinza Betbeder (1971:738) wrote that the women of the *Abazigaba* in Buzinza would swear by the motto *Mubali gwa Kabaijo*. The motto would disclose her origin, but she would in most cases be unaware of its meaning.
70 West Highlands': Rwanda, above; Bugufi: Mzee D. Semuguruka, BFFM:449. 1991; for Bushuubi and Buha: Mzee T. Bgoya, BFFM:478, 1991.
71 Kyamutwara: *Omukama* E. Rukamba said that the root *-zig-* in *Aba-zig-aba* is derived from *okuziga*, which means 'to print black' (BFFM:151, 1989).

72 Kiziba: Mwalimu John Kahatano, himself an *Omuzigaba* from Kiziba, said that his ancestors were diviners, ironworkers and hunters of the Baziba kings (BFFN/4:45, 1991).

73 Karagwe: *Kinyany'engoma* Bachorobekwa, BFFM:56, 1991.

74 Cory and Hartnoll (1945:281) acknowledged the assistance of *Mwami* Francis Lwamgira in connection with their work on clans. For Buhaya, Lwamgira had a similar role as Apolo Kaggwa's for Buganda. He took down his peoples' history in three works, one of which is *Amakuru ga Kiziba na abakama bamwo, The History of Kiziba and its kings* (1945). Cory and Hartnoll appear to have followed Lwamgira's system of dividing the Kihaya clans into three groups: "a) Pure Hima ... known as 'enfuro', b) Bastard Hima ..., c) Peasant, or serf ... known as 'bairu'." In accordance with the perspective of the Hamitic Hypothesis, seemingly adhered to by Lwamgira and themselves alike, they confidently asserted that the pure Hima clans "claim direct descent from the pure pastoral clans of Galla stock".

75 Kiziba: Amelia Mutahangarwa (BFFM:293, 1991).

76 Specialist pastoralists, the *Bahuma/Bahima*, do not work with metals. Nomadic pastoralists had their spears made for them by other specialists (Williams 1938:32).

77 Karagwe: Ta Petro Bukoko, BFFN/4:54, 1991.

78 Karagwe: *Kinyanyengoma* Bachorobekwa, BFFM:57, 1991.

79 Karagwe: Mzee Kajungu, BFFN/5:5, 1991. *Eki-* is an amplicative Bantu prefix, apparently used to stress the particular ritual function of the fish, *enfuru* (BFFM:144-145).

80 Ta Rwabunuma from Kibondo village was a very respectable old man, who used to walk bent double to our vicarage in Bushangaro in the 1970's. He had got baptised in the ELCT, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, but he was very much feared by the villagers, who said he was a rain caller.

81 Karagwe: Mzee Kajungu, BFFM:144-145 and BFFN/4:5, 1991, Ta P. Bukoko, BFFN/4:54-55, 1991 and *Kinyanyengoma*, BFFM:57, 1991.

82 Igara: G.W. Binyindo, BFFM:640, 1992.

83 Igara: G.W. Binyindo, BFFM:647, 1992.

84 Kiziba: Rev. E. Lutashobya, BFFN/3:36, 1991; Rujumbura: Information from Alice Komujuni, who obtained this information from her mother, Ruth Bwashuko, daughter of Kalegesa, father of Kitaburaza, who was the last heriditary ruler of Rujumbura (Uppsala, 16/7 2006).

85 Kyamutwara: *Omukama* E. Rukamba, BFFN/2:34, 1991.

86 Ihangiro: Rev. S. Machumu, BFFM:401, 1991.

87 Rusubi: *Omukama* Kasusura, BFFN/6:1, 1992.

88 Karagwe: Mzee Kakuba, BFFM:122, 1991.

89 P.c. from President Y.K. Museveni, Kampala 27/5 2006.

90 This tradition was recorded by Anna Rwentabaza Zakye, herself an *Omuzigaba*, from *Abazigaba* clan members in Ahakishaka, Bushangaro, Karagwe, in December 1989.

91 Seeking explanations for the continued presence of the *Mugasha* mythology in *enanga* oral performance of the Bahaya, Mulokozi elaborates (1987:41): "*Mugasha* is, after *Wamara*, the most powerful deity in the Bahaya pantheon, excepting the supreme deity, *Nyamuhanga*. As such, many people turn to him whenever they need divine assistance. Barren women go to him for off-spring; villages turn to him when there is a drought, or when there is a devastating deluge; politicians and professionals go to him to seek assistance in attaining higher offices; wronged people go to him to seek justice, etc. It is no wonder that his priests are among the richest and most powerful in the land. It is, thus, natural that this mythology should be kept alive in the society."

92 Kyamutwara: *Omukama* E. Rukamba, BFFM:183-184, 1991. In the context of Karagwe, *Mugasha*'s wife is mentioned as *Nyakagoro*, the daughter of *Kagoro* (information from Ma Kambabazi, Notes from Karagwe I:138, 1975).

93 Kyamutwara: *Omukama* E. Rukamba, Pocket Notebook 2:78-79, 1991.

94 Elsewhere in Burundi a successful iron smelt would be secured by the ritual sprinkling of beer on the bellows and the iron as well as invocation in praise of *Mugasa* among other spirits (Celis and Nzikobanyanka 1976:116).

95 I am grateful to Prof. Katoke, who, in corporation with the Karagwe Cultural Officer, Ndugu Boas Kaitaba, gave me the great opportunity to see the metal work treasures that are still in Karagwe, 16/9 1991. None of the previous researchers working on the problem of the Karagwe metal artefacts have taken into account that the local Runyambo term for the ritual implement is *enyondo* (Katoke 1975:59-60, Sassoon 1983:99-100, Reid and MacLean 1995:153). The correct term *enyondo* for the king's ritual hammer/anvil was subsequently given by Ma Bachorobekwa, *Kinyanyengoma* 'Drum Sister' of *Omukama* Rumanyika in Kaisho (BFFN/4:14, 1991).

96 Cf. Anvil A in Sassoon (1983:97. Fig. 2).

97 *Omukama* E. Rukamba, BFFM:194, 1991 [complimentary information given by James Tumusiime 16/6/2010, Kampala, Thomas Rwentabaza 21/6/2010, Kayanga, Karagwe and Boas Kaitaba 2/7/2010, Nyakahanga, Karagwe].

98 *Omukama* Rukamba, BFFM:189-194, 1991.

99 Kyamutwara: *Omukama* E. Rukamba, BFFN/2:6, 1991.

100 *Umwami* Kigeli V Ndahindurwa of Rwanda, Pocket Note Book 3:46, 1992 in Nairobi. I am grateful to Mary McMaster, who realised the potentials of the "crowned" crane totem for the interpretation of the origins of interlacustrine kingship symbolism (November 2001).

101 Nkore: Mzee Israel Katuuka, BFFM:581, 1992.

102 Schoenbrun (1997:171) quotes an older source (Meyer 1914:140) for Luhaya, which has *ntúúhwa*, 'crowned crane'.

103 The *Bahunga* have been mentioned as carriers of royal corpses in Karagwe (Katoke 1975:32, Cory and Hartnoll 1945, Appendix V:9).

104 Ma Kwera Elisabeth, resident in Karagwe since the early sixties, said that as an *Omweegakazi* from Rwanda she is considered as a *Muhungakazi* among the Banyambo of Karagwe. They all respect the *enkira* totem (BF Pocket Notebook 2:20, 1991).

105 Information from Dr Kasalina Matovu at the Institute of Languages, Makerere University, 15/8, 1994.

106 As has been explained in Chapter one, endnote 5, *ente*, 'head of cattle', is generally used as a noun that embraces both bulls and cows in Rutara and North Nyanza.

107 Here follows a few examples from the list of the *-gab-* panoply of terms prepared by my Rwandan research assistant Butare Dismas. The *-gab-* terminology encompasses both political and spiritual aspects of Kinyarwanda ideology applied on family as well as kingship level. *Ku-gab-a*, 'to give a cow in terms of gift', *ku-gab-a igitero*, 'to launch an attack', *ku-gab-ira*, 'to give generously either a cow or a piece of land'. *Umwami yagabiraga abantu* is a phrase that implies the king could give people power. *In-gab-irano*, 'present or gift from God: *ingabirano y'Imana*. *In-gab-ire*, 'God's gift', occurs as a name given to females by parents referring to them as God's gift. *Umu-gab-a*, 'leader of royal militia', *in-gab-o*, 'royal militia, 'shield' and 'name of the herd'. *Umu-gab-o* is a 'man' while *u-bu-gab-o* refers to 'courage' and 'manhood' generally (BFFM:700-701, 1992).

108 Rwanda: Information given in a research report by Butare Dismas, BFFM:701, 1992.

7
The Role of the King

This chapter offers a proposed reconstruction of the traditional role of interlacustrine kings. The present examination is primarily focussed on the position of the king in Rutara-speaking peoples' old kingdoms. It is important to bear in mind that the scope of *Bacwezi* terminology is limited to Rutara speech communities. The investigation starts from the perspective of Buhaya. Testimonies given by representatives of West Highlands-speakers and the Fipa will complement the picture. During the time of their ancestors the kings who ruled their *mahanga* between the Great Lakes did so within the overall framework of social and belief systems. There is a general agreement on the position of the king although the details in the political and ritual contexts of the different kingdoms expose variations. These variations will provide clues to a further search for solutions to the *Bacwezi* problem.

First, the perspective of the traditional leaders themselves will be explored. Next, I will show how the people experienced their kings and how they reacted against the abuse of power.

The king as Co-ordinator of Political and Spiritual Agencies

Unless we take into consideration the close interaction between political and spiritual forces at work in the Great Lakes region, it is difficult to understand the basic power structures that controlled the traditional role of the king.

Despotism in Time Perspective

Enthusiastic reports of early travellers in Karagwe made Rumanyika I known as a gentle father and shepherd of his flock, faithfully observing "the Bahima taboos" (Katoke 1975:86). The political scientist René Lemarchand (1977:96), from the context of Burundi, has correctly remarked that "on the eve of European penetration" the position of the king was often described as *primus inter pares*. On the other hand John Roscoe did not hold the same opinion of the nature of interlacustrine

kings. Roscoe felt that the *Mugabe* of Ankole (1923b:12), the *Kabaka* of Buganda (1911:186) and the *Mukama* of Kitara, underpinned by popular beliefs, ruled their nations as despots.

The people of Kitara were a despotically ruled nation believing firmly in the supreme right of their king, who was regarded as something more than an ordinary man, as, indeed, approaching to the divine, for his power on earth was absolute and he had almost as great an influence over the heavenly powers (Roscoe 1923a:51).

Scholarly opinion abandoned the stereotype of African despotism decades ago.[1] By 1942, from the perspective of Buhaya and Karagwe clan societies, employees of the British administration had shown that despotism did not describe the traditional leadership structure. They wrote that even though "the chief[2] came to be regarded as the supreme ruler in whom the recognised authority and prerogatives of the clan heads were vested" his power was deemed to be restricted. Neither could he have had as great an influence over the "heavenly powers" as Roscoe had thought, because of an "inherent superstition which was fostered by priests and elders who by this means acted as upholders of the people's rights" (Korit-Schoner 1942:7).

Anakleti and Ndagara (1981) demonstrated that kings exercising despotic powers in the Great Lakes region did so at a particular time. Despotism only developed when the influence of commercial capital reached the interior from the coast by the 19th century. According to these scholars the search for commercial profit was the driving force behind this change. To that end the kings were looking for ways to alienate their people to make more profit.[3] Before the 19th century interlacustrine kings "were but an embodiment of the community ... subjected to all the community laws in force from the time of accession to kingship to the end" (Anakleti and Ndagara 1981:151). In a deeper time perspective the community laws working between the Great Lakes encompassed both the living members and their ancestors (cf. for example John Mbiti 1969).

Kyamutwara: Kingship from Within

The problem is now to define the role of the king in the traditional hierarchy of political and spiritual forces. What was the position of

the king? The brilliant explanation by *Omukama* E. Rukamba, from his perspective of the Kyamutwara kingdom of Buhaya, will serve as a foundation for my analysis of the role of interlacustrine kings. Although given as late as in 1991, the following account may reflect continuity from the past. It is expressed in ceremonial English, a medium and overall context that unavoidably influenced the implementation of kingship functions during colonial times. Nevertheless, in view of the overall interpretation of the sources available, *Omukama* E. Rukamba's narration can be regarded as a possible reconstruction of traditional rule as it had been developed in Buhaya.[4]

> All the prerogative powers were confined or vested upon the king. As Chief Justice he could administer as well as judge any case brought before him for justice. And he could order citizens to wage war with other kingdoms in case of trespass of another kingdom to his kingdom. In that case he was the Commander in chief of the army.
> However all the power was confined upon him, yet he could not take any decision without consultation of his elders or advisors as for example his deputy, *Katikiro*, and other elders in the palace. Of course, some being a clan member or royal family member and other normal clans or functional clans in the palace.
>
> By using fortune-tellers (diviners, *abafumu*) the *Omukama* could see what was going to unrest the people or his citizens in the kingdom and find ways to avoid it by all necessary means. Once a *Mukama* had become aware of for example a disease that affected the country, he could find ways of remeding (cure) it or stop it before it spreads all over the country.
> Also in case of famine in the country, despite of enforcing people to work hard and produce much, he could also consult the matter to the spirits or his ancestors on the issue and to advice what to do in order to eradicate the famine in the country.
> So most of his powers in the country were in the hands of his spirits or of his ancestors.
> The kings remained as superior heads of their kingdoms with a power of administration to keep peace and tranquillity in their kingdom and advocate the orders of government to the people in their kingdom and maintain law and order of the country.[5]

The *Omukama* in Buhaya described his traditional role as an expert with long-standing experience of interlacustrine kingship in transition. The fact that the *Omukama* has successfully adjusted to the conditions of a modern secular state does not preclude him from honouring the presence of his ancestors. To *Omukama* E. Rukamba, the closeness of his *abazaire*, 'parents', is a reality, which means that he is required to follow their advice mediated through his *embandwa*, 'priests'.[6] "During the time of his ancestors"[7] the king possessed all legislative and executive power but he could not make a decision without consulting political advisors. The interlacustrine kingship system of political and spiritual rule functioning on two levels of reality will now be further illustrated by information departing from the context of Buhaya.

Plate 7. **Seated on a leopard skin, Omukama Emmanuel Rukamba II shared his knowledge in local as well as regional cultural history from the perspective of his ekikale in Kyamutwara, Buhaya**

Firstly, on the political level, the king is required to listen to the views of his councillors, headed by his Deputy the Prime Minister, the *Katikiro*.[8] The elders of the Prime Minister were the *Abalamata*. Among the *Abalamata* there were a few who were called *Abalamata empika buso*, which means that they were so friendly to the king that he told them his secrets. The mother of the king also had much influence and could admonish her son.[9] Other elders on village level are the *abagurusi*. The king would appoint a person "with the innermost knowledge" of the problems in his respective area as his *omugurusi*. He is an advisor who remains in the village so that he can always present a problem from the village to the king.[10] Then after he had collected and heard the views of all his *abagurusi* of various places, the king could know how to solve the problem or the grievances.[11]

Secondly, the king depends on the system of spiritual guidance. The *Omukama* has spiritual advisors who can tell him how to satisfy the need of the ancestors. Most importantly, the keepers of the *Kyamutwara* kingship drums would report to the king in case the drums would sound without anybody beating them. This is a sign believed to indicate danger threatening the country or the king himself.[12] Spiritual advice is also mediated through the *embandwa* priests of the *Abacwezi*, who comprise the *embandwa* of various former rulers and royal ancestors, those "who happen to resurrect and go to the heads of people and start telling you what is happening in the country". The first mentioned *embandwa* for Kyamutwara is *Wamara*.[13] Rev. E. Lutashobya said that in Kiziba the *embandwa* of *Wamara* was the head of all the *embandwa*. The king had to listen to his advice and take it very seriously.[14] But in order to get a clear picture of the solution to a problem in his country, Kyamutwara shows that the king also had to consult *embandwa* of lower rank in the spiritual hierarchy through their respective elders, *abagurusi*:

> If a spirit has come on a certain priest's head to discuss or talk about something that needs to be done urgently, then the priest sends the *omugurusi* to come and inform the *Omukama* that this and that is required to be done. Then they can refer that message to another priest to see whether it is true or not. Then after he had proved beyond doubt, the *Omukama* can order people to perform what requires to be done.[15]

Therefore, after interpolating all information, the *Omukama* is the one to order for implementation of what should be done. The *Omukama* will now address all his ancestors, the *abazaire*, 'parents':

> They are all depending on me. They are all depending on me. I am their bishop, if not the pope.[16]

In the modern context, where the Christian churches most frequently provide the norm for "official"[17] religious practice, it was natural for the informants I consulted to explain their traditional religion by using Christian terminology. Baptised into the Roman-Catholic church, *Omukama* E. Rukamba used the position of the bishop or the Pope as an obvious analogy to explain his own mandate to address all the spirits jointly, the *abazaire*. The *Omukama* himself cannot enter into any direct ritual relationship with the individual spirits. My sources generally agree on the point that the interlacustrine kings could not be possessed by a *Mucwezi* spirit, because one king could not come into the head of another one. That would have been regarded as incest. This explanation refers to the *embandwa* spirit mediumship cult into which kings could not be initiated.[18] Although the *Omukama* does not have ritual relations with any specific spirit, he is the head of all the spirits, *omukuru w'embandwa zoona*.[19] In accordance with the overall interlacustrine belief system he addresses his ancestors jointly on the premise that they would approach God on his behalf (cf. Mbiti 1969/1970:70). The specific part played by the king depicted here from the context of Buhaya appears to be the one of co-ordinating all spiritual forces in the country. The former heir to the drum of Kianja, Dean Matia Lutosha confirms this picture accordingly:

> *Embandwa zoona*, 'all the spirits', were in the head of the *Omukama*. All the spirits were under the command of the king.[20]

On top of the spiritual hierarchy the ritual role of the king in Buhaya is to co-ordinate all the spirits. As ruler and administrator at the summit of the political hierarchy the king ultimately depends on spiritual blessing. This is because "most of his powers" are perceived to be "in the hands of his spirits or of his ancestors", in the words of *Omukama* E. Rukamba

for Kyamutwara, Buhaya. The Kihaya case has shown that the ritual and political role of the interlacustrine king are deeply interwoven.

Karagwe, Nkore and Bunyoro

In Karagwe the role of the king was more explicitly related to the concept of the kingship drum, *Nyabatama*. The king's closest advisors, *abaramata*, were at the same time *abagoma*, 'drum-keepers'. They were the *enganzi*, literally 'beloved' or favourites of the king. Karagwe elders explained that the term refers to a hereditary office on clan basis, a so-called *omuruka*.[21]

Plate 8. Mzee Warwo, Deputy Drum-keeper to *Omukama* Rumanyika, Karagwe

The Banyankore share the term *enganzi*, which has generally been rendered as Prime Minister. Karugire contends that according to all his traditional accounts, the Banyankore did not keep any office of the Prime Minister until the coming of the British. As in Karagwe the *Omugabe* of Nkore could have several *enganzi*, but Karugire does not mention any functional clans linked to the *enganzi* office (1971:110). Yet the symbol of the *enganzi* as the favourite star of the new moon, *enganzi y'okwezi*, representing Venus, reoccurs as a consistent pattern in *Bahima* wall paintings of the Banyankore (Tuhirirwe-Tumwine 1976/1977:110, Appendix) as well as in decorations adorning small drinking calabashes, *enkai*, in Karagwe (Farelius 1978). The new moon is here percieved as the symbol of the king, while Venus represents the prime minister.[22] But although the Banyankore and the Karagwe Banyambo traditionally ruled by the *Bahinda* dynasty, share kingship terminology and general perceptions, the role of the king as co-ordinator

of political and spiritual agencies has been developed differently in each of these kingdoms.

The Banyankore elders who instructed me in this matter unanimously state that the *Bagabe* did not keep any *emandwa* for spiritual guidance. Instead they consulted *Bagyendanwa*, the kingship drum, who had "his" own establishment in an enclosure bearing "his" name.[23] Its authority derived from a commonly held belief that it was a *Bacwezi* drum. After interpreting the signs of the drum, the drum-keeper could warn the king of impending danger that was believed to threaten the kingdom.[24] The kingship drum *Bagyendanwa* was an open institution consulted for spiritual advice by the *Omugabe* as well as all men and women in Nkore, except for members of the *Basingo* clan. Ostracised for having caused the death of the *Mucwezi Mulindwa* they were forbidden for evermore to see *Bagyendanwa*.[25]

The *Abakama* in Karagwe kept the functional clan of the *Abahutu* as their *Embandwa Nkuru*, chief priests who worked as medium for all the spirits, *abazimu n'abacwezi boona*.[26] Whereas *Wamara* was the most important spirit in Buhaya for kings and commoners alike, the kings in Karagwe gave top priority to the spirit of their ancestor, namely *Ruhinda*. *Wamara* was said to be *Rusingo*, 'the Conquerer' for the common Banyambo.

Also to the Banyankore kings the spirits of their *Bahinda* ancestors played a crucial part in the maintenance of peace and prosperity in the country. The *Abyangwe* and the *Abahinda* performed rituals of appeasement of all departed kings, princes, princesses and important clans-people in the shrine of *Kagondo*. In the Kinyankore kingship context *Kagondo* has a twofold meaning, referring both to the shrine and to the royal ancestors who were placated inside its compound.[27] The *Muyangwe* priest offered sacrifices and supplications to all the royal ancestors when calamities threatened the kingdom. The king had no priestly functions in the Kinyankore *Kagondo* rituals, rituals that evidently were performed on behalf of the *ihanga*. In this case they were in the hands of ritual *Bahinda* and *Bayangwe* clan-officials. The latter had the most important role.[28]

On the whole, I was unable to find any concrete evidence to prove how the *Abagabe* themselves exercised their capacity as co-ordinators of spiritual agencies in their kingdom. Denying that he had any ritual function, Karugire tends to emphasise the political role of the *Mugabe*. This researcher aptly stresses that the *Bagabe* were part and parcel of the Banyankore community:

> [...] the Omugabe occupied the same position in the whole country as the owner of a kraal or head of a household occupied in his own establishment (Karugire 1971:82).

But according to basic common traits in the interlacustrine belief system, the head of a household had ritual duties to perform on behalf of his *eka* and therefore the *Omugabe* of Nkore should theoretically have had some kind of implicit ritual function. One reason why no priestly role could be accounted for the *Omugabe* may be found in the institutionalisation of *Bagyendanwa*'s establishment, which is deemed to be a late development from about the first half of the eighteenth century (Karugire 1971:100). In the case of Nkore, then, perhaps the king's role as co-ordinator of spiritual agencies in his kingdom was transferred to the institution of the kingship drum. Additionally, in times of crisis the *Omuyangwe* priest was in charge of sacrifice and prayers to the *Bahinda* royal ancestors in *Kagondo* on behalf of the *ihanga* of the Banyankore.

In Karagwe the name *Kagondo* refers to the principal kingship shrine and house of the sacred drum, *Nyabatama*. Here the king was actively involved in rituals. The earliest sources for Karagwe show that the *Omukama* in Karagwe had priestly duties to perform on behalf of the *ihanga*. Grant (1864:139), "[...] who made his first hand observations during his five months' stay at the court of Rumanyika [I] regarded the position of the Mukama as that of ... prophet, priest and king" (Katoke 1975:37). However, according to my sources, the king did not lead "religious services" as one of Katoke's (1975:37) informants had maintained. When we hear about "religious services" our associations go to the Christian context and we visualise how the king would pray for his people in the presence of a congregation. Such a situation did not exist in the traditional kingdom of Karagwe. The king did not pray

in public. He would go behind the screen, *orutimbe*, in the kingship shrine of *Kagondo* where the drum *Nyabatama* was kept in seclusion not to be seen by anybody except its keepers, the king, his ritual wife and sister.[29] Nowhere else but in Karagwe did I find kingship ritual context terminology, which so clearly expresses that the king himself goes behind the veil in front of the sacred kingship drum.

The role of the king in the Bunyoro "centre of creation", from where the *Babiito* would have exercised their hegemony, was described and expressed in divergent terms, a picture that naturally mirrors historical developments. In a situation of large-scale administration the king's position appears to have been more apparently political than ritual. At least this was the impression of an observer like John Beattie, who did his research from an anthropological perspective at a time when the traditional religion had been officially suppressed for more than half a century. Beattie (1971:104) had found that the king in the Bunyoro context was considered "the centre and source of all *political* power (my Italics)".

Before we have all the pieces in the jigsaw in place it is impossible to generalise on the problem of the role of the king in Bunyoro. Suffice it to say here that for political advice, the *Omukama* generally relied on his *Abajwarakondo*, literary 'crown wearers', but since the time of Roscoe (1923a) sometimes rendered "Sacred Guild" (K.W. 1936:292). The crown wearers were men whom the king could reward for merits of outstanding services to the kingdom (Nyakatura 1973:181).[30] As for spiritual advice, according to the Banyoro informants I consulted, *Wamara* was known as the spirit of the *Babiito* clan,[31] whose messages were mediated through their *nyakatagara*, a term that has generally been translated as 'household medium'. The granddaughter of *Omukama* Kabalega said that the king's *nyakatagara* for *Wamara* was a woman, who had a hereditary seat, *Ekitebe*, in the palace. She would be from a different clan but of the same totem as the *Babiito*. The special status she enjoyed in the kingdom rendered her an establishment of her

own.[32] In Roscoe's account, *Wamara* is ascribed the position of the major spiritual agency to whose medium the king would turn in case of impending crises like sickness among the people or a plague among the cattle.[33] The priest would inform the king of the kind of offering that was needed to satisfy *Wamara* and the king would provide the required bull for the purpose (Roscoe 1923a:23).[34]

Plate 9. **Blessed by *Omukama* Patrick Kaboyo Olimi III, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni is being crowned to get the honorary title *Mujwarakondo* of the Tooro kingdom. The crown, *ekondo,* is provided with long white hair from the colobus monkey, extending as a beard from the chin of its wearer**

The evidence hitherto accounted for shows that there were two prominent spirits, through whose mediums the kings of Rutara-speaking peoples' kingdoms first and foremost would get access to spiritual guidance. Those were *Wamara* in Buhaya and Bunyoro and *Ruhinda* in Karagwe and Nkore.

The King and God

The question is whether the king used to pray to God on behalf of his *ihanga*. I did not manage to obtain any clear indication from the informants I consulted that he could approach the Creator, *Kazooba Kanyamuhanga* or *Ruhanga*. Nevertheless, Rehse (1910:106) had got the impression that the king in Kiziba was not subject to the spirits because he was only subordinate to God. Likewise, for Karagwe, one of Katoke's (1975:37) informants had told him that the king only "offered sacrifices to God, never to the spirits of his ancestors". Rev. Mpyisi, a Munyarwanda representative, said that the king was briefly the intermediary between God and his people.[35] All these explanations appear influenced by a Christian perspective, in my view out of context. There is no reason to believe that a king would not be part of the general community that involved both the living and the spirits of their dead members and leaders. As co-ordinator of both political and spiritual agencies in his kingdom the king held a key position in the context of the interlacustrine belief system. My sources from Buhaya claimed that the *Omukama* knew all the spirits and addressed them jointly, which would generally imply that he did so on the premise that they would in turn forward the supplications to the Creator. But just as the family father would implore God in cases of utmost crisis when all other measures to redress an emergency situation had failed, the king, on behalf of the *ihanga*, should have had the mandate to offer prayers to the Creator. Byaruhanga-Akiiki brings out this logic clearly in his treatment of the evidence from Bunyoro. The king would offer sacrifices and supplications to *Ruhanga* "whenever there was calamity such as plagues or illnesses among the people, war, pestilence, famine, smallpox and so on" (1982:49). Within the context of the interlacustrine belief system the king did here for his *ihanga* what the family father was expected to do for his *eka*.

John Beattie (1971:107), on the grounds that the kings were never directly involved in the spirit mediumship cult, concluded that the *Mukama* of Bunyoro was not 'the great high priest of the nation' as Roscoe (1923a:90) had claimed. Therefore the above-mentioned scholar did not believe his subjects thought of him as their father. However,

the information that I got from Buhaya,[36] Rusubi,[37] Rwanda,[38] and also Bunyoro,[39] affirms that the king is unanimously described as the father of all his people.

Redistribution of Assets

A testimony for the Banyarwanda given in Mbarara district ascertains that it was the king's duty to keep the people together.[40] Kingship in Bunyoro was regarded as a unifying factor.[41] As arbitrator the *Omugabe* of Nkore settled disputes between people, individuals and groups. As Commander in chief of the army he had to ensure security for his people against aggression from outside.[42] It was the duty of the king to ensure that the land had plenty of cattle. If the cattle died of an epidemic he authorised his army to go and raid some cattle from e.g. Karagwe and Rwanda.[43]

As their benefactor the king, *Omugabe*, 'the Giver', had to "give people from the property he had".[44] The following account depicts the traditional redistribution system from the perspective of the Banyankore:

> It was believed that all property in Nkore belonged to *Omugabe*[45] and people brought cattle and food to him continuously as gifts. He would in turn sit in his *Mugabi* to give away things to people. This was called *okwananira*.[46]

Although the king had to control all the riches of the country, natural resources, minerals, each and everything, "because all powers were confined upon him",[47] all his assets were considered property of the kingdom.[48] In the southernmost *Tusi* successor state of Fipa the designation of the king, *Mwene*, 'the Owner', conceptualises the idea that the king embodies the people. The king is the Owner, not for his own sake, but on behalf of the people:

> Traditionally all the property of the country belongs to the people. The king's duty was to advise his people on how to use their property. At harvesting time food crops were collected in the stores to be distributed to the people in case of famine and to those in need. So the king was trying to equalise the wealth of the country by collecting from those who had a lot to those who did not have through collection to royal enclosure and redistribution.[49]

Allegedly, it was because the wealth of the whole kingdom was regarded as his that the *Omukama* of Bunyoro also took care of the widows and the poor people. Evidence from Karagwe, Buhaya and Nkore confirms that as much as the king could take away things, he could also give out property to his people and to those in need.[50] The following quotation illustrates the benevolence of the *Omukama* of Kiziba from within the context of the *Nyarubanja* land tenure system.

> Every month during the New Moon women staying in the banana plantations neighbouring the *kikale* (*Nyarubanja)* had to cook every type of food crops they were growing and bring them to the king. At that occasion they had the opportunity to request the king to give them what they needed. They had a leader, *Mukuru w'Abagandokazi*, who led the procession to the palace. The food was brought cooked, all common people were present and the children were all invited to share the meal. They came every month for such an event. The king used to give them presents, normally bark cloth and salt.[51]

"Invisible" Drums and Power-sharing

As everywhere else in the region, true leadership depended on the way the king shared his assets, *kugabira*, in material as well as spiritual terms (cf. Schoenbrun 1994-1995:276). To the Banyarwanda the term *kugabira* does not only mean that the king could give land or cattle to his subjects, the concept also involves power distribution.[52] The *Omukama* in Kyamutwara described how the king would ritually distribute power to his chiefs, the *bami*, and their village headmen, the *bakungu* (Korit-Schoner 1942:11). The ritual of *kukamira engoma*, 'to milk the drums', was performed by the *Omukama*, literally 'the Milker'. The *Omukama* here differentiates between "visible" and "invisible" drums. The "invisible" drums should not be seen by anybody except for members of the so-called functional clans. They are perceived as vehicles of spiritual blessing from the ancestors, on clan as well as kingship level.

> At the occasion of the new moon, about two years after his installation, but only once during the reign of each *Omukama*, all the drums in the kingdom have to be empowered.

> There are visible and invisible drums. The invisible drums are the drums that empower the king. They are kept by certain elders in the palace, *ekikale*. Then the *bami* subchiefs and the *abakungu* village headmen each have their ancestral drum, according to their clans. They are also called invisible drums. In the evening, after dark, the king's *bami* and *bakungu* brought their invisible drums, which must be wrapped in cowhides and bark cloths, to the palace. Also the invisible drums in the palace were brought to the courtyard, *Nyakabuga*, in front of the main house, *Nyaruju*.
> Then they slaughtered a bull with two cows, which must be either completely white, *kitare*, or semi-white, *kiza*. The blood was collected in a wooden trough. The elders were standing in a semi-circle facing the *Omukama*, 'Milker', who addressed, *ahangire*, all the ancestors, *abazimu*: *Abakama b'engoma*, 'kings or owners of the drums', we have come to milk your drums'. Then each elder brought his drum for the king to smear it with blood. They resumed their positions and the king concluded the ritual: *Nakamira engoma zanyu*, 'I have milked your drums'. Because that is what you do as *Omukama*. You milk the drums with blood *nokamira engoma*.
> Now also they are sharing with you your power.[53]

As in the case of Kianja above, all the spirits were under the command of the king in Kyamutwara. His was the mandate to address the spirits, here perceived as "owners of the drums". The owners of the drums had to be given due respect, because peace and prosperity of the kingdom depended on their blessing and benevolence. Ritual sharing of power was completed in the sacrificial blood of "the white cow", here named *kitare*. In this case the ritual role of the king as *Omukama*, "the Milker", is to "milk" the drums with blood. But the origin of the royal title *Omukama* derives from milking of cattle and will be dealt with in the context of social stratification.

Stressing slightly different aspects of his ruling mandate illustrated by voices from a number of interlacustrine kingdoms, I have now attempted to give an impression of the position of the king as head of state and co-ordinator of political and spiritual forces. Local testimonies departing from the perspective of the Buhaya kingdom of Kyamutwara have enriched our knowledge of the king. The general picture is a portrait of the ideal state of affairs, depicted by elders who in most cases

themselves have been part of that system.[54] What happened when the king fell out of the system, when he misused power?

Ways of Resistance Against Power Abuse

The Power of the King

In virtue of his office the king was believed to possess superhuman powers. As the ruler of everything his subjects believed that he could procure rain and stop it,[55] curse a disease or deformity and it would disappear as well as send away lions or locusts attacking the country by proclamation, *okuhanga*.[56] The latter is a term used at court, included in the special terminology pertaining to kingship, the *rukale* language of the *ekikale*, 'royal enclosure'.[57] Perceived to be strong and terrifying like a lion, the wild animal his subjects feared most, they greeted him with the words *Habuka Entare*.[58] The people in Ihangiro also expose the all-important value they attach to the life-giving milk by saying that *Omukama murungi nka amata*, literally, 'the king is good as milk' with the symbolic significance that as Head Milker, the king has power over everybody else.[59] Milk is treasured as the origin of life, *entabuko y'oburora*.[60] Thus the king was believed to have power over life and death, he could bless somebody as well as curse them.[61]

Therefore, for the common good (cf. Korit-Schoner 1942:7), the king had the right to condemn and kill people in order to uphold law and order in his kingdom. Voices from Buhaya related that the king's first duty as the ruler, *Mutwazi* and judge, *Mulamuzi*, was to sentence a person to death.[62] In Bugufi also his authority to kill was mentioned first in the list of the prerogative powers of the *Umwami*.[63] The Banyankore said that the *Omugabe* was the only one who could pass a death sentence and his decision was always final.[64] Other elders in Karagwe stressed that the king used to sentence people to death especially in case of rebellion.[65] Exerted from his *kikare* in *Bweranyange* the king's power had been experienced as terrifying. The king used to keep tame lions at the *kikare*, sometimes mentioned as his "dogs" ready to punish rebellious subjects, *abagome*.[66] The king could order his men to arrest people in the villages and drag them along to *Bweranyange*, where they were cut to pieces or with hands and feet tied thrown alive down the infamous precipice *Rwebagira* to be

consumed by lions.[67] The Banyambo were convinced that *Omukama* Rumanyika II could send his lions, *entare*, or "boys of errands" to revenge for abuses.[68]

The Power of Blood Pacts

Ta Matayo Rwemburara in Karagwe said that 'ancient kings used to kill people for no reason, *abakama ba kalai bakababaitira abantu busha.* Cases of false accusations appear to have been common: *Bamubeyerera bati, nanka yakora eki, amutuma amwita*, 'people would approach the king and lie to him that so and so has done this, and the king would send for that person and kill him'.[69] But there were traditional means by which his subjects could react against their king when they felt he terrorised the population unjustly. The *omugani* about the man who made bloodbrotherhood with the king, *Omushaija alikunywana n' Omukama*, transmits the message that brave men could find a way to come close to the king himself and show him that he should not listen to lies told by envious and malicious people, *ab'eitima.*[70]

Once upon a time there was a man who went and offered his services to a king, *yagenda yayehongera Omukama.* The king took him into his service.

After some time the man approached the king: "*Waitu, Mukama wange, ninyenda tunywane*, 'my Lord, I want us to become bloodbrothers'".

The king agreed and they completed the blood pact ritual.[71] The man said to the king: "'I have cut friendship with you in the navel, *nanywana na iwe ahanda*, 'so that I will never go hungry', *enjara etalinduma*".

After three days the man came back to the king and said: "*Ninyenda tunywane*, 'I want us to become bloodbrothers'."

The king queried; "*Kandi tunywanehi*? 'Where are we going to cut friendship?'" (But we are already bloodbrothers).

"*Tunywane aha rurimi*, 'let us make bloodbrotherhood in the tongue'" (Let us stay together and only talk well[72]).

Bakanywana n'orurimi, 'they exchanged their vows'.

The man said, "*Ee … nanywana na iwe aha rurimi*, 'I have made bloodbrotherhood with you in the tongue'. *Nayanga bilimi bya Karagwe*, 'I refuse the lies of Karagwe'".

After about another three days, the man again said to the king, "*Ninyenda tunywane*".

The king answered, "You man now you are disturbing me. Where do you want us to cut friendship this time?"

"*Tunywane aha kutu*, 'let us make bloodbrotherhood in the ear' (let us never listen to gossip). *Nayanga bitu bya Karagwe*, 'I refuse to listen to the gossip of the people in Karagwe'".

The king agreed.

The king brought out an iron bar. And he said to the man, "if you shall ever wrong me, I shall kill you". The king continued, "don't think that because we are now bloodbrothers, I can't kill you. I shall kill you (when the need will arise). And this is the rope that I will use to bind you".

The man answered, "Yes".

The king fetched one hundred cows, *ente igana*,[73] and gave them to the man. He built him a house. He uplifted his status, *yamulingilika*, gave him servants, wives and herdsmen to tender his cows. The king and the man stayed together.

Then came a man with an evil mind, *omwangiomunyarwango*, and started to tell the king lies about 'his bloodbrother', *munywani-we*:

"When his bull falls sick he would say that 'rather than you my bull falling sick and even dying, better the king's child die instead, rather than you my bull die, better my king's wife die instead, or even my king himself'.

The evil man concluded, 'watch out'."

The king said, "it is enough, go and strip this man of all that I had given him, bring back my cows and then we will see what he will do."

They left for the mission. Then the king's son came forward and said to the king, "my lord, let me go with these men to where you are sending them. I would like to witness how this man is insulting you."

The king said to his son, "follow them".

He caught up with the men on their mission and said to them, "let us conceal ourselves in the bush, let us hide from this man and witness how he insults the king".

They all agreed and moved on concealing themselves. The cows came in from grazing and the king's bloodbrother could not find his bull.

He called out for his bull, thanking his king as he praised the bull accordingly:

Ati "nkulenga mukama wange", ati "nikyo nanywanire nawe ahanda, enjara etarinduma".	He said, "I compare you to my king–that is why the king and I exchanged blood from our navels, so that I may not one day go hungry."'
Ati, "nkulenga mukama wange", ati "nikyo nanywanire nawe aha rurimi, nkanga bilimi bya Karagwe."	He said, "I compare you to my king, that is why the king and I made bloodbrotherhood in the tongue, for I refused the lies of Karagwe." (I want to trust the king only and not lie to him, others may do so.)
Ati, "nkulenga mukama wange", ati "nikyo nanywanire nawe aha kutu", ati "nkanga bitu bya Karagwe".	"I compare you to my king. That is why I made bloodbrotherhood with him in the ear, for I refused the gossip of Karagwe".

The men kept waiting in the bush until just before daybreak at the time when the cows are awake and moving from their enclosure on their way to the 'milking place', *omu ishazi*. Again they witnessed how the king's bloodbrother praised his bull at the same time giving thanks to his king. Now the men were convinced of his innocence and wanted to go home. However, after daybreak they went towards the king's bloodbrother's house. He saw them coming and gave them a hearty welcome, brought out *ebirago*, 'mats' to sit on, offered them liquor and a barren cow to slaughter. They spent the whole night feasting. Early

in the morning the king's son wanted to take him before his father, the *Omukama*. When the king saw the men returning, he asked why they had come without what he had sent them for. The king's son narrated everything that they had heard the man saying. Now the king was amazed and said to the evil man:

"Eh, lero mushaija, okanterana na munywani wange, niije nimwitire busha."	"You man, you have really caused division between me and my bloodbrother when you came and falsely accused my friend, so that I may kill him for nothing."
"Kambe niwe naita."	"Now you are the one I am going to kill."

> The man who told the lies was killed. The king gave his bloodbrother more cows and many more things. He also gave him more servants. The man went back to his place and lived happily thereafter.[74]

This tradition told in Karagwe reinforces the importance of *omukago*, 'bloodbrotherhood', as a respected traditional method of building bridges between peoples of the Great Lakes region.[75] Not only did *omukago* have a crucial role in forging political unions between states but also between kings and their subjects. Here we have seen that it was the subject who took the initiative to the pact, an initiative that the king accepted. In Bunyoro *Omusiita* Thomas Tibeita said that blood pacts occurred between common people and kings. If a man cut friendship with the king, all the clan members of the king's bloodbrother would become friends with the king and were exempted from being betrayed or killed. The *Basiita* of Bunyoro are known to have forged blood pacts with over thirty clans.[76] The man in the story told in Karagwe took a great risk with the specific purpose of getting close to the king and to teach him the lesson that he should refrain from killing people on false accusations.[77] This tradition must have served as a warning to mischief makers of former times.[78]

Checks and Balances to Power

Subsequently, there existed some kind of traditional checks and balances to political power in the old days. Rev. E. Lutashobya gave the following example from Kiziba:

> When the king entered the shrine to approach the drum at the New Moon rituals, the drum keepers, *batalala*,[79] had their methods to make their grudges known to the king. When the king did not give them enough food, the drum keepers used to increase the fire to make it very hot until he promised to give them what they asked for–then they reduced the fire.[80]

Banyankore elders told me that if the *Omugabe* made a mistake, or was about to do so, his advisors would say, *Nyakusinga, tikikorwa*, 'Great one, this is never done'.[81] Information from Bushuubi confirms that the king's councillors, *abahanuzi*, had the right to tell him his faults and even the power to punish him (Cory Paper No. 168:6). From the context of the Fipa (Sumbawanga), *Mwene* Dantes Ngua stated that the king was responsible to the people. Through the councillors people could depose him and get another one from the same *Tusi* royal clan.[82]

Sources from Buhaya hold that when the king acted against the will of the people and their representatives, basically the clan-heads, he was no longer king. The common principle that "the king can do no wrong" only applied as far as he did what the community sanctioned (Korit-Schoner 1942:7). Within the context of the *Nyarubanja* land tenure system in Buhaya this statement appears problematic. The system of *Nyarubanja* implied that the king could deprive the community leaders, namely the clan-heads, of their land and confer it as a reward to his favourites, who thereby became individual owners of land (Cory and Hartnoll 1945:123-124). These circumstances must have upset the power structure as it went against the traditional interlacustrine perception that in theory the kings were the owners of all property in the kingdoms. If the councillors were chosen among the king's favourites without hereditary functions, they would go a long way to react against misuse of power. The following information given by Rev. S. Machumu in 1991 seems to reflect a situation where it was deemed very difficult to depose a

king in Ihangiro. It appears that not until the king became insane had the councillors any clear mandate drastically to intervene against power abuse and depose him:

> In case the king became mad, he could kill many people until when he undresses. That is when they can take him to the traditional healers for treatment. This is because they said that the king could not do anything wrong. The king could be removed from power in case he becomes mad and all other treatment fails.[83]

The case of King Kalemera's mental illness is still remembered in Kiziba:

> When King Kalemera got insane he decided to slaughter people to the extent that the blood would flow from a hill called Magango up to the river Muleleizi. But the people caught him and he was tied in a fresh skin of a bull and killed. They used to put the body of the king in a fresh skin of a bull in those days.[84]

To sew up insane kings in a fresh skin of a bull seems to have been an old method by which the people could execute kings deemed unfit to rule.

There was an alternative way of controlling the power of the king among the Bahaya. Disgruntled subjects could simply abandon their king. They would choose to emigrate to another kingdom, if their king became too despotic (Korit-Schoner 1942:7). In a different context, a similar reaction is attested for Ankole in 1902, when its "chief colonial collaborator", the Prime Minister Mbaguta, made King Kahaya blaspheme the sacred kingship drum at the latter's accession ritual, reshaped in a Christian form. In protest many *Bahinda* and traditional *Bahima* moved elsewhere with their cattle (Muvumba 1982:134-145).

The Power of Kingship Drums and Spirits

From the perspective of Buhaya, I have demonstrated that the ultimate checks and balances to political power in the interlacustrine kingship system lay in the hands of the ancestors. Here the conclusion by Schmidt (1978) that the *embandwa* spirit mediums of the *Bacwezi* basically functioned as a means of opposition against the ruling dynasties makes sense. But following the interlacustrine belief system, the *embandwa* were part and parcel of that system, which in itself through the ancestor

spirits of kings, the *Bacwezi*, provided checks and balances to the political leadership of the dynasties.

The corrective spiritual presence of the *Bacwezi* was especially conceptualised by the kingship drums. The belief that the drum was above the king finds its most conclusive evidence in the function of the drum as sanctuary from any death sentence decreed by the king. I found evidence for such a legal procedure in the *Bahinda* kingdoms of Nkore and Karagwe (Farelius 1978:40). If a Munyankore, who had been condemned to death by the *Mugabe*, "were able to dash to the shrine of *Bagyendanwa* and to touch the drum, he would not be killed. The *Mugabe* would forgive him; he would be freed and given his former rights" (Oberg 1940/1970:157, cf. Williams 1936:305). Likewise, in Karagwe, the shrine of the kingship drum *Nyabatama*, which was *Kagondo*, provided salvation and sanctuary for condemned prisoners. If a person could run and seek refuge at the kingship shrine, his blood would not be shed.[85] Tinkaligaile (1974:4) explains the sanctioning function of the kingship drum by reference to *Wamara*. In Kianja it was the shrine of *Wamara*, "king of kings", which served as sanctuary for murderers.[86]

There was only one clan in Karagwe, whose officials had the power to reverse an order given by the king. If the king gave an order to kill someone, nobody else but an official of the *Bayango* clan could ask the king to forgive the victim.[87] The same pattern re-occurs in Nkore:

> Even when the king passed a death sentence on someone, and that person ran and threw himself at the feet of a *Muyangwe* in the palace, the sentence would be waived.[88]

In Karagwe, at the top of the hierarchy of clans, the *Bayango*'s close connection to the kingship drum *Nyabatama* was marked by their name: the *Bayango b'engoma*, 'the *Bayango* of the drum'.[89] They did not get that honorary denomination because they were drum-keepers or *abagoma*, a term found in Karagwe (cf. note 21) and Igara.[90] In Karagwe the hereditary office, *omuruka*, of the drum keepers, *abalinzi* or *abakama*

b'engoma was in the hands of the *Abakaraza*.[91] But the source of the *Bayango* power was the drum itself, because the spirit of *Nyabatama* was *their* ancestor, the *Omuyango*. In other words, the *Omuyango* was the *omuzimu gw'obukama*, 'the spirit of the kingdom' itself.[92] This was so in spite of Tinkaligaile's claim that *Wamara* was believed to be the great *Mucwezi* spirit behind the kingship drum of Karagwe.

Concluding Remarks

My reconstruction of the role of the king has widened our knowledge of traditional leadership and kingship in the Great Lakes Region. Selected literature on the topic has not gone deep enough into the multi-level power mechanisms at work in the societies concerned. Neither has any regional comparative study about the subject matter been undertaken. Thanks to the contribution of the informants consulted, especially from the local perspectives of Buhaya and Karagwe, gaps in our knowledge could be filled in.

Departing from testimonies given by informants in Buhaya, the investigation of the traditional role of the king has shown that the political and ritual exercise of power were deeply interwoven. Previous exposition has demonstrated that the peoples between the lakes experience that their communities embrace the realities of both the living members and the spirits of their dead. Manifestations of the beliefs in the ancestors had been suppressed during colonial rule and kings had adhered to Christianity. Nevertheless, the Kyamutwara case has made it clear that the closeness of their departed *abazaire*, 'parents', is still reality to kings in the region.

Omukama E. Rukamba said that during the time of his ancestors, when all legislative and executive powers were in the hands of the king, he was required to listen to the views of his councillors, at all levels of society. First and foremost the king depends on the system of spiritual guidance. In case of impending danger threatening the country or the king himself, spiritual advice is channelled through the drum keepers, who know how to interpret the signs of the kingship drums. Moreover, the *embandwa* priests at the Kyamutwara court are important. Their role is to receive in spirit mediumship the spirits of the *Bacwezi*, comprising the *embandwa* spirits of former rulers and royal

ancestors. All sources consulted agree that a *Mucwezi* can never possess the king himself, because "one king could not come into the head of another one". That would have been regarded as incest, because spirit mediumship was perceived as a marriage, whereby the medium had reached the status of "kingship" in the invisible world. Ma Kyabona, the popular *embandwa* of Ahakishaka, Karagwe, was said to "know all the spirits", which means that they could "speak through her head".

The ritual role of the king in Buhaya is to co-ordinate all the spirits. In accordance with the overall interlacustrine belief system the king addresses his ancestors jointly on the premise that they would approach God on his behalf. The king was perceived as a father to his people. In Bunyoro, as the last resort, when all means had failed to redress a crisis situation in the country, the king could offer sacrifices and supplications to God directly, just as a family father was expected to do for his household.

The Kinyankore role of the king deviates from the pattern depicted here. While kings in Buhaya and Bunyoro kept the *embandwa/nyakatagara* of the *Mucwezi Wamara* as their chief spiritual advisor, the Banyankore kings and commoners alike consulted the kingship drum *Bagyendanwa* for guidance. Its authority was derived from the belief that it was a *Bacwezi* drum. Neither could any priestly role be substantiated for the Munyankore king. On the other hand, the king in Karagwe was directly involved in rituals performed on behalf of the *ihanga*. On the occasion of the New Moon he would go behind the veil in the kingship shrine of *Kagondo* in front of the sacred drum of *Nyabatama* together with his ritual wife and sister. *Kagondo* in Nkore had no connection with the kingship drum, *Bagyendanwa*, but was the name of the shrine and spirits of royal ancestors. In times of crises the *Omuyangwe* priest in Nkore was the one in charge of sacrifice and prayers to the *Bahinda* royal ancestors in *Kagondo*. In Karagwe also the *Bahinda* ancestors were important to the kings, while the common Banyambo turned to *Wamara Rusingo* for help.

In theory all the assets in the country belonged to the king. According to the basic principles of the *-gab-* kingship he had to redistribute

property as well as power. In Kyamutwara power distribution was sealed in blood from "the white cow," now called by the name *Kitare*. On clan as well as kingship level "invisible" drums were perceived as vehicles of spiritual blessing and legitimacy from the ancestors.

The king's power had been experienced as terrifying. As much as the king could redistribute property to his subjects, he could take away everything. His was the power of life and death. A tradition told in Karagwe shows that the power of blood pacts, *omukago*, could work as a way disgruntled subjects could approach the king and teach him that he should not kill people for nothing.

The first duty of the king as ruler and judge was to sentence a person to death. But if a condemned prisoner managed to dash to the shrine of the kingdom and/or touch the kingship drum his life would be spared and he would be given back his former rights. In Kianja the shrine of *Wamara* served as a sanctuary for murderers, while the Banyambo and the Banyankore could turn to *Nyabatama* and *Bagyendanwa* kingship drums for salvation. The *Bayango* clan in Karagwe ranked as the highest in the hierarchy of clans. Only *Bayango* officials had the power to reverse an order given by the king. The *Bayangwe* in Nkore were entitled to the same rights. Although there was a belief in Karagwe that the kingship drum derived its power from the great *Mucwezi Wamara*, the descendants of drumkeepers said that in reality the spirit of *Nyabatama* was perceived as *Omuyango*.

The conclusion is that the *Abayango/Abayangwe* clan of the Monkey totem commands an exceptional ritual as well as political position in the Karagwe and Nkore old kingdoms. But for Nkore we have learnt that the king himself had no ritual role either in relation to the *Bacwezi* drum *Bagyendanwa* or the *Kagondo* shrine devoted to *Bayangwe/Bahinda* royal ancestors. The *Bagyendanwa* establishment was an open institution accessable not only to the king but also to every Munyankore except for members of the *Basingo* clan. It appears to have existed from some time in the eighteenth century. To find out its position in the historical context of interlacustrine kingship drums more details beyond the scope of the present study are required.

In the Karagwe old kingdom the ritual role of the king appears to be exceptional. The present exposition has clarified that the *Muhinda* king had an explicit ritual role directly linked to the kingship drum *Nyabatama*, believed to embody the *Omuyango* spirit of the Karagwe kingdom. Following Sapir's reasoning, the greater *Omuyango* kingship ritual elaboration in Karagwe would illustrate that this was a ritual from bygone days used in connection with the drum. He (1916:23) observed that "as a rule the complex is oldest in the tribe in which it has the greatest elaboration".

In the process of identifying *Bayango/Bayangwe* ritual contribution to Great Lakes kingship, a possible historical scenario behind the emergence of the *Mucwezi* spirit *Wamara Rusingo* has to be drawn up. It concerns the core of the problem related to the theme of the next chapter: "Cattle, Kings and Aristocracy".

Endnotes

1 See for example the overview by Père Maurier, "Un roi, pour quoi faire?" in an issue devoted to African religions and the kingdoms in the journal *Vivant univers*, published by the White Fathers, No. 348, 1983.

2 In the terminology of Buhaya colonial administration "chief" was generally used for *omukama* (see for example Cory and Hartnoll 1945:3). *Omukama* E. Rukamba finds that term misleading and without meaning, because the chiefs and sub-chiefs refer to the officials who are administrators under the kings, not to traditional rulers (BFFM:224, 1991).

3 Implemented in slightly different ways the politics of "divide and rule" had been the strategy to obtain colonial hegemony in East Africa (Farelius 1993). As we shall see, what appears to be a means of exerting influence over the kings in Buhaya the colonial masters made adjustments in the traditional system of administration.

4 *Omukama* E. Rukamba of Kyamutwara was himself an exceptional role model by the way he managed to maintain his position as traditional *Omukama* at the same time as he was actively integrated in the modern Tanzanian political system. Installed before 1962, when the power of the kings were reduced to traditional functions only, he succeeded to transfer his political role into new forms within the policy of the Tanzanian government. At times he served as elected Chairman of the Bukoba Local Government of the CCM (*Chama cha Mapinduzi*), the leading political party of Tanzania.

5 *Omukama* E. Rukamba, Kyamutwara, BFFM:219B-220, 1991.

6 *Omukama* E. Rukamba stressed to me that "of course he was under spiritual influence", which meant that he felt that he could not tell me anything about his culture without the blessing of his ancestors. So was his decision to tell me the secret and sacred traditions "for the sake of the present and the coming generations", a decision that he must have taken after consultations with his *embandwa*.

7 During the interviews *Omukama* E. Rukamba used the phrase "during the time of my ancestors" as a recurring reference to ancient pre-colonial times.

8 British colonial government, who took over Tanganyika from the Germans towards the end of the First World War, made internal adjustments in the kingdoms' administration. They

appointed two *Katikiro*'s, the first one who would be the Deputy of the *Omukama* in his capacity as leader of the Local Government and the second one who would be solely responsible for the administration within the palace (*Omukama* E. Rukamba, BFFM:262, 1991).

9 Kiziba: Rev. E. Lutashobya, BFFM:316, 1991 and Kianja: Dean M. Lutosha, BFFM:359, 1991.

10 Cf. Rwanda: "Injustice would be curbed since there was at any point/everywhere a representative of the king, who would put forward all the common man's grievances before the king" (Rev. Mpyisi, BFFM:756, 1992). In Ahakishaka, Karagwe, the king's advisor on village level, who appears to have had the role similar to an intelligence officer of modern systems was his *omunywani*, blood brother (information from Ma M. Kambabazi, 1976).

11 Kyamutwara: *Omukama* E. Rukamba, BFFM:261-262, 1991.

12 Kyamutwara: The *Omukama* mentioned two names of kingship drums in *Kyamutwara*. *Enkuruibili* is the drum that empowers his *Bankango* dynasty (together with the spear *Kakona*) since they took power about 1710 (Cory Paper No. 114), while *Mwiganzigu* was said to have originated from the *Bahinda* of Kianja, but ultimately from Karagwe (BFFM:205-206, 1991).

13 *Omukama* E. Rukamba enumerated the following *Abacwezi* spirits for his kingdom of Kyamutwara: *Wamara, Mabuye, Kimuli, Kagoro, Kyomya, Bwogi, Kashashira, Mugasha* (BFFM:263-264, 1991).

14 Kiziba: Rev. E. Lutashobya, BFFN/3:31-32, 1991.

15 Kyamutwara: *Omukama* E. Rukamba, BFFM:265, 1991.

16 *Omukama* E. Rukamba, BFFM:264, 1991.

17 One of the cornerstones of Mwalimu Nyerere's political program for Tanzania has been enshrined in the expression *siasa haina dini*: 'politics has no religion'. Consequently, there is no "official" religion in the state of Tanzania today. According to my experience on the ground in the 1970's, conversion to Christianity did not necessarily prevent Church members from consulting traditional healers in case of sickness, although it was "officially" against the teaching of the churches. Religious inclusiveness is a salient feature. Cf. Olov Dahlin's study on the religious and medical pluralism in Zimbabwe: *Zvinorwadza*, Uppsala 2001.

18 This is because spirit mediumship is regarded as a marriage. When somebody gets possessed by an *Omucwezi*, he becomes *Mucwezi* by clan, perceived as the same clan as the king. *Mukabandi* is someone who has been possessed by a *Mucwezi*, meaning that she is now 'the wife of others' (personal information from Dean Wilson Lugakingira, Bukoba, BFFM:282, 1992). Karugire (1971:84) concluded that the kings of Nkore and Mpororo had nothing whatever to do with "*emandwa* worship". For Bunyoro Beattie (1971:107) found that kings were never directly involved in the spirit mediumship cult. The granddaughter of *Omukama* Kabalega told me that the *Babiito* clan was not supposed to take part in *kubandwa* rituals (*Omubiitokati* Masitura Murara Atwoki, BFFM:948). The same rule is attested for Rwanda according to information given by king Musinga's wife Mrs Mujawingoma (BFFM:785,1992).

19 Kiziba: Rev. E. Lutashobya, BFFN/3:32, 1991. *Embandwa* is the word for spirit and priest alike.

20 Kianja: Dean M. Lutosha, BFFM:358, 1991.

21 Karagwe: Mzee Warwo Rwakataguza and Mwalimu Gabriel Kasenene, Notes from Karagwe II:114-121, 125-126, 1991. Mzee Warwo of the *Musindi* (*Mushambo* in the wider interlacustrine context) clan had been appointed by *Omukama* Rumanyika to assist his main drumkeeper and advisor, Mzee Kajungu of the *Bakaraza* clan (cf. Katoke 1975:163-164). Kajungu and Warwo were Rumanyika's *enganzi*, Warwo acting as Kajungu's deputy (personal information from Prof. Katoke, 15/9 1991). Others who were looking after the kingship drums were Mzee Chilasiku and Mzee Rushambira of the *Abazigaba* (*Abatundu*) clan (*Kinyanyengoma Bachorobekwa*, BFFM:55, 1991). I managed to interview Warwo and Kajungu, while they were still alive, and thanks to Prof. Katoke I also got valuable information from the descendants of Mzee Rushambira, Ma Mukampisi and Ta Timweshobwa Rushambira (BFFM:21-25, 1991).

22 For the former kingdom of Nkore Mr Coleb Kamugungunu explained the symbolic pattern whereby the king is perceived as the New Moon and his Prime Minister as Venus (Kampala 10/3 1987). Karagwe: Ta Ferdinand Rwabutondogoro (BFFM:6a, 1986) told Stanislaus Bashungwa that *enganzi* was understood as *engaragwa aha rubaju*, 'the shining star at the side of the moon'.

23 Nkore: *Omuhinda* John C. Machwa, BFFM:537A, 1992; Mzee John Mark Mutembeya, BFFM:540, 1992 and Mzee George William Nagwokwo, the last drum-keeper of *Bagyendanwa*, BFFM:561, 1992. For information and Kinyankore terminology of *Bagyendanwa* see Lukin Williams, "The Inauguration of the Omugabe of Ankole to Office", *UJ*, Vol. 4, 1936:300-305.

24 Nkore: Mzee G.W. Nagwokwo, BFFM:558-559, 1992. From his own experience as drum-keeper Mzee Nagwokwo commented that often the drum-keepers did not want to reveal their power, so often they kept the knowledge to themselves. On the unifying role of *Bagyendanwa* to the Banyankore see Oberg, "The Kingdom of Ankole in Uganda" in *African Political Systems*, ed. Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, 1970:144-45.

25 Nkore: Rev. J.W. Kashaka, BFFM:602, 1992.

26 Karagwe: Mzee Warwo, Notes from Karagwe II:125, 1991.

27 Nkore: Rev. J.W. Kashaka, BFFM:596, 1992.

28 Nkore: Information about *Kagondo* rituals were given by the son of its last *Muhinda* keeper, Mzee John M. Mutembeya (BFFM:542-544, 1992).

29 Karagwe: Ma Mukampisi and Ta Rushambira, BFFM:21, 1991 and Ta Leonard Aligawesa, BFFM:38, 1991.

30 "It was an honour given by the king to very few royal chiefs or people of outstanding performance. Even Obote was crowned (by Sir Tito Winyi) and he was called *Mujwarakondo* but surprisingly he abolished the kingdoms" (*Omuhinda* Simon Kyamanywa, BFFM:929, 1992). President Y. Kaguta Museveni was crowned to get the title *Mujwarakondo* of Tooro kingdom by the Late *Omukama* Patrick Kaboyo Olimi on August 31st 1994.

31 For Bunyoro cf. information from the *Kibandwa wa Ngobya*, Venance Byaruhanga, BFFM:993, 1992.

32 Bunyoro: *Omubiitokati* Masitura Burara Atwoki, BFFM:948-949, 1992.

33 Roscoe (1923a:22-23, 27) did not use the proper Runyoro terminology for 'medium' or 'priest', neither are there any other women-priests of higher rank than "the mediums of the wives of the Bachwezi" in his account.

34 According to the former heir to the hereditary office of the king's *embandwa* in Kiziba devoted to *Wamara*, Rev. E. Lutashobya, the king had to provide all the ritual items needed (BFFN/3:32, 1991).

35 Rwanda: Rev. Mpyisi, BFFM:759, 1992.

36 Kyamutwara: *Omukama* E. Rukamba, BFFM:247, 1991.

37 Rusubi: *Omukama* Kasusura, BFFM:436, 1991.

38 Personal information from the *Umwami* of Rwanda, Kigeli V, Nairobi, 17/3 1992 and Rose Mukande, *Mujawingoma*, BFFM:767, 1992.

39 Omucwa A. Rwakaikara, Bunyoro, BFFM:956, 1992.

40 Bishop Kosia Shalita for Rwanda, BFFM:690, 1992.

41 Bunyoro: *Omuhinda* Simon Kyamanywa, BFFM:929, 1992.

42 Nkore: Mzee Geoffrey W. Katondwaki, BFFM:554, 1992; Mzee Anania Murumba and Mzee Petero Garobungu, BFFM:531, 1992.

43 Mzee G.W. Katondwaki, Kashari, Nkore, BFFM:554, 1992.

44 Rev. S. Machumu, Ihangiro, BFFM:411, 1991.

45 According to sources for Bunyoro "the wealth" and for Rwanda "the cattle" of the whole kingdom was regarded as the king's (*Omucwa* A. Rwakaikara, Bunyoro, BFFM:955, 1992 and Mzee Mico Joseph, Rwanda, BFFM:742, 1992).

46 Nkore: Mzee Anania Murumba and Mzee Petero Garobungo, BFFM:533, 1992.

47 *Omukama* E. Rukamba, Kyamutwara, BFFM:179, 1991.

48 Mzee Mico Joseph, Rwanda, BFFM:742, 1992.

49 *Mwene* Dantes Ngua, Fipa, Sumbawanga, BFFM:512-513, 1991. The statement claiming that the king was trying to equalise the wealth of the country appears influenced by Nyerere's *Ujamaa* ideology (comment by Tekeste Negash, March 2001). It seems to me that the *Mwene* used modern political phraseology to express basic ideas inherent to the *-gab-* kingship from which Mwalimu Nyerere in any case would have drawn his political concepts.

50 For Bunyoro: *Omucwa* A. Rwakaikara, BFFM:956, 1992; Karagwe: Ta J. Kakuba, BFFM:130, 1991; Buhaya: Dean M. Lutosha, Kianja, BFFM:351, 1991; Nkore: Mzee A. Murumba and Mzee P. Garobungo, BFFM:531, 1991. In the 1970's, during our time as missionaries in Ahakishaka we heard of at least one case of social welfare under the auspices of *Omukama* Rumanyika II. The king had given an *ekibanja* banana plantation to a widow, Ma Maria.

51 Kiziba: *Omwana* Amelia Mutahangarwa, BFFM:300, 1991.

52 Rwanda: *Umwami yagabiraga abantu* is a phrase that implies the king could give people power. Information given in a research report by Butare Dismas (BFFM:700, 1992).

53 Kyamutwara: *Omukama* E. Rukamba, BFFM:212-213, 1991.

54 To a limited extent a few of the testimonies given may have been embellished by nostalgia. This naturally refers to some of the statements made by the Banyarwanda community living in exile in Nairobi at a time before they had any possibility to return to their home country.

55 Karagwe: When we lived in Ahakishaka in the 1970's the Banyambo used to tell us how they experienced the supernatural capacity of Rumanyika II to control water and rain. The mere presence of Rumanyika was believed to cause such heavy rain that people gathered for certain functions that may have been against the interests of the king, would have to scatter taking cover (Farelius 1978:45). Ta P. Kapele, among others, subsequently confirmed the belief that the king could control rain and water (BFFM:112, 1991). The institutionalised *kuiga enjura*, rain calling, for the Karagwe kingdom was in the hands of the *Abazigaba* clan, who approached *Mugasha*. Also for the kingdom of Kianja, it is reported that the king called rain through his *embandwa* of *Mugasha* (Dean M. Lutosha, BFFM:361, 1991). The Banyankore believed that the *Omugabe* could "make rain" (Mzee P. Kirindi, BFFM:639, 1992), but in the name of the kingship drum *Bagyendanwa* (*Omuhinda* J.C. Machwa, BFFM:537A).

56 Karagwe: *Kinyanyengoma* Bachorobekwa, BFFM:89, 1991, Ta J. Kakuba, BFFM:130, 1991; Rusubi: *Omukama* Kasusura, BFFM:436-37, 1991; Kianja: Dean M. Lutosha, BFFM:351, 1991.

57 Beattie (1971:109) has a list of the most common royal vocabulary used at the Bunyoro court, several of which occur in other kingdoms investigated. The royal vocabularies deserve a special investigation for regional comparative purposes.

58 *Habuka* literally means 'welcome' (Karagwe: *Kinyanyengoma* Bachorobekwa, BFFM:88, 1991). It is a term specially used at court, a *rukale* term. Traditionally, it was only used by men (Ta M. Rwemburara, Notes from Karagwe I:29, 1975). Kiziba: His subjects would greet the king: *Habuka entare ya Kiziba*, 'welcome, lion of Kiziba' (Rev. E. Lutashobya, BFFM:309, 1991). Attestations from Ihangiro: Rev. S. Machumu, BFFM:373, 1991 and Kianja: Mr M. Byabato, BFFM:339, 1991.

59 Ihangiro: Rev. S. Machumu, BFFM:406, 1991.

60 Kianja: Dean M. Lutosha, BFFM:368B, 1991.

61 Rwanda: Rev. Mpyisi, BFFM:763, 1992; Bugufi: Mzee D. Semuguruka, BFFM:464, 1991.

62 Kianja: Dean M. Lutosha, BFFM:361, 1991 and Ihangiro: Rev. S. Machumu: BFFM:408, 1991. Cf. Rusubi: *Omukama* Kasusura, BFFM:438, 1991.

63 Bugufi: Mzee D. Semuguruka, BFFM:460, 1991.

64 Nkore: Mzee G.W. Katondwaki, BFFM:554, 1992; Mzee A. Murumba and Mzee P. Garobungo, BFFM:531, 1992.

65 Karagwe: *Kinyanyengoma* Bachorobekwa, BFFM:89, 1991, cf. Ihangiro: Rev. S. Machumu, BFFM:408, 1991.

66 Karagwe: Mzee M. Rwemburara, Notes from Karagwe I:24, 1975, *Kinyanyengoma* Bachorobekwa, BFFM:55, 1991, Mzee J. Kakuba, BFFN/2:28, 1991, and Fr. Luduviki Rwakiboine, BFFN/5:2, 1991.

67 The precipice is clearly visible from the road going from Lake Mujunju, passing *Bweranyange* on the right-hand side. When passing that place, the evangelists used to tell us about its grim history (Notes from Karagwe I:60, 1973). Katoke (1975:39) mentions that the name *Rwebagira* means 'that which slaughters or kills for itself'.

68 As late as 1980 the following incident is recorded to have happened: "A rich man in Karagwe had very many cows. He asked Rumanyika to give him a herdsman. The *Omukama* got annoyed but answered the man: 'Don't worry, I will send my boys to herd your cows'. Then lions came and attacked his cows and killed them in plenty" (personal information in Dar-es-Salaam 11/12 1987 by Michael Mwombeki and Stanislaus Bashungwa).

69 *Omugani*, 'story', about a man who falsely accused a king told by Ta M. Rwemburara, 28/2 1976, Ahakishaka.

70 According to my experience on the ground in Karagwe, *eitima*, 'envy', was constantly mentioned as a root cause for *oburogi*, 'witchcraft'. In the context of church politics, gossip and "campaigning" were used as weapons to undo presumed "enemies".

71 The ancient ritual of *omukago*, 'blood pact', is sealed in blood taken from a cut on the navel of the two friends and smeared on two coffee beans, which were eaten by the respective parties (see Harry Tegnaeus 1952:79).

72 Ma Felista, my house assistant in Ahakishaka 1976, who helped me to transcribe the story and was well versed with the cultural context, said that the translation of *kunywana n'orulimi* should be 'let us stay together and talk good things, *kufumora kurungi*'. I got a moving testimony on the reality of this symbolism in 1978, when we had returned to Ahakishaka shortly after Ta Matayo had passed on. During the last days in his life he had said: "Birgitta *na inye tukanywana na rulimi*". We had forged a lasting relationship and talked very well together!

73 See Chapter eight. for the social implications of *ente igana*, a hundred cows.

74 *Omugani* told by Ta M. Rwemburara, Ahakishaka, 2/2 1976. I am grateful for comments made by Dr M. Mulokozi in 1988, Dar-es-Salaam. Special thanks to Dr Adolphina Kateka, their Tanzanian Ambassador's wife, born in Karagwe, who kindly translated the story into English (Stockholm, March 2001), thus straightening out some of my question marks.

75 Cf. McMaster, McMaster, p.c. afore-mentioned.

76 Bunyoro: *Omusiita* Thomas Tibeita, BFFM:1033, 1992.

77 In view of the overall oral traditional context in our region, there is no reason to assume that this *omugani* does not reflect on a real incident (personal information in Kampala, 13/4 2001 by Mrs Elena Mushema (53), *Omuhungakazi* from Karagwe).

78 Evidence from Rwanda shows that if envious brothers had falsely accused somebody as *umugome*, 'traitor', before the king, it was very difficult to have one's case brought to justice. *Tutsi* notables could be victimised in that context (Mrs Rose Mukande, *Mujawingoma*, King Musinga's wife, BFFM: 767-768, 1992).

79 The word means 'those who cannot starve', i.e. those who live closest to the king and whom he feeds under all circumstances (Cory and Hartnoll 1945, Appendix).

80 Kiziba: Rev. E. Lutashobya, BFFM:307,312, 1991.

81 Nkore: Mzee A. Murumba and Mzee P. Garobungo, BFFM:525, 1992.

82 Fipa: *Mwene* D. Ngua, BFFM:513, 1991. The *Mwene* gave me an interesting instance whereby he himself in 1954 had been severely punished by the elders for having stealthily removed the sacred spear *Kalinga* to be sent to Britain for scientific investigation. He had been beaten and forced to plead for ancestral forgiveness (BFFN/5:160-162, 1992).

83 Rev. S. Machumu for Ihangiro, BFFM:411, 1991.

84 Kiziba: Rev. E. Lutashobya, BFFM:316, 1991.

85 Karagwe: The sanctioning function of the drum was expressed in the term *obwirukiro*, 'a place where to get rescue' (Mwalimu G. Kasenene, BFFM:7, 1989). See the unpublished paper by Rev. Domiciani Tinkaligaile, "Blood symbolism in the Religious Life of the Banyambo of Tanzania and the Judaeo-Christian Tradition", Makerere University, Kampala 1974:4.

86 Kianja: Dean M. Lutosha, BFFM:358, 1991.

87 Karagwe: Ta Leonard Aligawesa, BFFM:38, 1991.

88 Nkore: Mzee Israel Katuuka, BFFM:575, 1992. Karugire (1971:137-138) writes that the *Bayangwe* had such an important position in the kingdom that they "enjoyed collective immunity from *all* forms of punishment, denied even to the Bahinda princes themselves".

89 Karagwe: Mzee W. Rwakataguza, Notes from Karagwe II:125, 1991.

90 In Igara the term *Abagoma* is an official title for the drum keepers of the kingship drum *Kihoza*. This information was given by the last keeper of *Kihoza* of the *Omushambo w'Omuteizi* clan before it was taken to Uganda Museum in 1967 after Obote had abolished the kingdoms (Mzee G.W. Binyindo, BFFM:640, 1992).

91 Karagwe: Mzee W. Rwakataguza, Notes from Karagwe II:125, 1991.

92 Karagwe: Ma Mukampisi and Ta Rushambira, BFFM:22, 1991.

8

Cattle, Kings and Aristocracy

Socio-economic and ritual aspects pertaining to the *Bayango/Bayangwe* clan will now help to locate its role in the history of cattle and kingship between the Great Lakes. In sources from Karagwe the white *Kitare* cow emerges as key symbol with the potential to unlock internal dynamics behind the historical role of a "dynasty" Rutara-speaking peoples call *Bacwezi*. To this end I will first examine *Bacwezi* traditions told among the Bahaya, the Banyankore and the Banyoro. Details given by elders interviewed in Mbarara District complement data from written sources. The new interpretation of these texts does not only reveal a different perspective on the *Bacwezi* problem, it can also offer an explanation to the archaeological remains at *Bigo*. Research to date has failed to accomplish this. This is not the first effort to come to terms with the *Bacwezi*. As we have seen, extensive literature treats the problem this "dynasty" represents.

The second category of traditions that will be scrutinised here is contained in written sources from Rutara and West Highlands-speaking communities. These are origin traditions on the Milk Test theme that justify social stratification based on the ownership of cattle in a number of kingdoms. State ideologists in the Bunyoro "centre of creation" invented them.

Cattle and Kingship

The Problem of Specialised Cattle Keeping

Ehret (1974:31, note 59) proposed a very early Southern Cushitic rather than a "Hamitic" origin for the *Bahima*. Schoenbrun (1990) would call these hypothetical early settlers *Tale* Southern Cushites. Ehret (1974:30-31, 1998:134) based his proposal on a Southern Cushitic word for blood, **-sagama*, occurring almost exclusively in the languages of those particular Bantu-speakers who today drink their cows' blood. If the *Bahima* were descendants of the posited *Tale* Southern Cushites, they

would have been settled in the southern parts of the region already around 300 BC. The *Tale* Southern Cushitic hypothesis, as forwarded by Schoenbrun and Ehret, seems to presuppose that ancestors of the cattle keeping *Bahima/Batutsi* had been living in the region for a long time.

After the Hamitic hypothesis had been debunked, there seem to be two main trends regarding the question of specialised pastoralism in the Great Lakes region. Schoenbrun (1993b:56) continues in the footsteps of Posnansky and Ehret, finding linguistic evidence for internal development of specialised pastoralism within the interlacustrine region, while Oliver had advanced the idea of a "Nilotic contribution to Bantu Africa". The latter (1982a:438) linked himself to Monica Wilson's (1958:46-49) observations of similarities in the cattle culture in many Bantu-speaking communities from the Great Lakes region southwards. Oliver emphasised the theme of the establishment of chieftain-ship by cattle owning strangers whom he linked to Nilotes.[1] Oliver (1982b:169-170) also proposed that Nilotes had brought the "intensive" pastoralism of peoples such as the *Bahima* and the *Batutsi* from outside the region. As will become clear below, intensive cattle keepers have been connected with the long-horned "Sanga" breeds. Referring to research results in the field of archaeology Schoenbrun (1998:89, note 46) remarks that "we still do not know if long-horned Sanga breeds developed in the Great Lakes region or if they were introduced from Sudan or the Kenya Rift Valley".

Refuting the hypothesis of any external Nilotic or "Hamitic" invasion, Chrétien (2003:69) suggests that "Bantu" pastoralism in the Great Lakes region had developed internally during the last two millennia. The perspective employed in this study presupposes that we need not posit any unilateral "Bantu" achievement to prove that the pre-colonial peoples between the lakes were masters of their own development. Evidence for early Southern Cushitic contribution to Bantu-speakers' knowledge of specialised herding has already been demonstrated. The traditions presented in this chapter will speak for

themselves on the origins of social stratification based on the ownership of cattle.

Specialised Herders and Karagwe Historiography

Karagwe terminology regarding the identity of her people has been distorted in historiography. This misunderstanding needs to be clarified. Following Oliver, Katoke (1975:7-8) accounted for the peopling of Karagwe. He categorised the *Banyambo* as "indigenous agriculturalists", hence "Bantu",[2] while the nomadic pastoralist *Bahima* were deemed Nilotic. But in reality the *Banyambo* name is related to pastoralism rather than to farming. In Karagwe Mwalimu G. Kasenene stated that *enyambo, ente za Karagwe*, 'cows from Karagwe', designated *enyambo zilera*, were the brown cattle with long white horns that the British first found in Ankore and therefore called *ankole*.[3] Banyankore elders,[4] familiar with the *inyambo* cows trained, adorned and kept for the pleasure of Rwandan kings, thought that *enyambo* cattle came from Rwanda (Maquet 1961:112).[5] Rev. J.W. Kashaka stated explicitly that the *enyambo* that originally came to Nkore from Karagwe over Rwanda were brown with long, white horns.[6] In his updated edition about the *Nyiginya* kingdom, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda*, Vansina (2004:84) concludes that "under Mazimpaka [after 1720] a new breed of bovids was introduced from Karagwe, the long-horned, brown cattle called *Inyambo*".

The *Banyambo* were unquestionably cattlemen. *Ente enyambo* refers to the long-horned cattle of the *Bahima* and of the *Bahinda* ruling dynasty. Ta J. Kakuba resolved the anomaly in applying *Banyambo* to the "indigenous agriculturalists", explaining that the people who came with these cattle were *Banyambo* and the indigenous population took the name *Banyambo*.[7]

The subjects of the dynasty that first united the Karagwe kingdom were *Baragwe*,[8] the founder mentioned as *Nono*, a development recorded in the phrase *Karagwe ka Nono*. According to *Omukama* Rumanyika II (Katoke 1975:162, Appendix) *Nono ya Malija*, son of *Malija*, was the last indigenous Bantu ruler who was deposed by *Ruhinda*. It has previously been shown that the subjects of the Karagwe kingdom believe

that their *Bacwezi* drum *Nyabatama* embodies the *Muyango* ancestor, perceived as the *omuzimu gw'obukama*, 'the spirit of the kingdom'. The meaning of the name *Nyabatama* seems to tell the truth about the *Muyango* ancestor located in 'the place where he bade farewell', *Karagwe*.[9] *Nyabatama* could be translated 'of those who got lost' or 'of those whose story came to an end'.[10] Their story did come to an end (*ku-tama*) in Karagwe, but in the material form of the kingship drum their ritual power is still perceived to be alive. Contra Katoke (1975:16-17) and Ford and Hall (1947:4), who assumed that *Nono* belonged to the *Basiita* clan, I propose *Nono* to be a *Muyango* of the *enkende*, 'monkey' totem.[11]

Ta J. Kakuba insisted that the members of the *Bayango* clan bled their cattle, *bakarasha abajwijwa obwamba*, *bakabulya obwamba*, 'they used to shoot (with an arrow) to extract blood', *obwamba*,[12] 'and prepare the blood for food'. However, Ta J. Kakuba also stated explicitly that the long-horned *enyambo* type was bled.[13] There is no contradiction because both the *Banyambo* and the *Baragwe* of the *Bayango* clan bled cattle.

Ta J. Kakuba mentioned the *Baragwe* "moving to Ankore".[14] The *Bayangwe* now residing in "Ankore" are probably descendants of the *Baragwe* of the *Bayango* clan whom Ta J. Kakuba said had "moved to Ankore". The head of the *Abagoboka Bayangwe* clan in Igara, Bushenyi (formerly Ankole district), independently confirmed that his ancestors had moved from Karagwe many generations ago, gradually settling in their present village of Kibaare, *Bweranyangi*.[15] *Abagenzi*, 'close friends' of the *Bahinda* kings, the *Abagoboka* share the totem of the *Nkyende*, 'monkey', except that theirs is the *Akakira*, 'small monkey'. We take note of the fact that the *Aka-kira* name refers to the tail of the monkey, because *omu-kira* means 'tail' (Taylor 1959:191). The *Abagoboka Bayangwe* do not belong to the *Bahima* aristocracy in "Ankore" (Steinhart 1981:129) but appear to be descendants of an earlier population that farmed and kept cattle. Holding the office of gatekeeper, *Omukumurizi*,[16] they used to be responsible for many important ritual functions at the *kikaari* of the Nkore kings. Their assistance at the consecrations was indispensable. Importantly, one of

their duties was to give the king the arrow used to bleed a cow. All the rituals they performed were said to have originated in Karagwe, where their ancestors originated. They are called *Abagoboka*, the people of *Ngoboka*, because their first ancestor was *Ngoboka*. *Ngoboka* kept white cows, the type of cow that was named *Kitare* and was used in kingship rituals emanating from Karagwe. The *Bayangwe* clan leader confirmed that the cows were "white".[17]

The white cows that the *Baragwe Abayango* bled originally would have been the smaller *engwebe*.[18] The arrival of the *enyambo* long-horned cattle followed the unification of Karagwe under the *Baragwe Bayango*, who kept short-horned cattle, *engwebe*. Pagès (1933:8) stated that the *Banyambo* of Karagwe, who brought the *enyambo* long-horned cows, were the same as the *Bahima* of Nkore (cf. Oliver 1977:640), confirming regionally collected sources from traditional experts. Katoke (1975:35) asserted that "the Bahima introduced the long-horned cattle", which he did not term *enyambo* but *engaju*. Anakleti and Ndagara (1981:153) also stated that the term *en-gaju* designates long-horned cattle, specifically for Karagwe but also for the Kagera region generally.[19] Schoenbrun (1993b:64) has **-gaaju*, 'large head of cattle with long horn' for Rutara.[20]

Katoke (1975:7) recorded a tradition that *Ruhanga*, 'God, the Creator', sent *Kanyambo* to occupy Karagwe, a tradition that need not imply a first creation, but should be interpreted within the context of the Bunyoro "centre of creation". *Kanyambo* represents "the *Bahima* occupation" in official traditions linked to *Ruhinda*. The persona *Ruhinda* fits well into Henige's (1974:34-36) description of an "epoch ruler, a single archetypal figure", who represents "the personification of an entire epoch of uncertain duration".[21] All sources combined, Karagwe non-official traditions would pin "him" down in the same general range of time as the great "drum mother" *Nyabugondo*, who is said to have come with long-horned cattle.[22] If this information is correct, the arrival in Karagwe of the cattle specifically termed *enyambo* would not diverge very much from above where Vansina suggested an eighteenth century date for the inception of *enyambo* in Rwanda.[23] Therefore, given the

Plate 12. Theodora Bachorobekwa, the *Kinyanyengoma*, '*Drum Sister*', of *Omukama* Rumanyika, knew the secrets of the white cow better than anybody else

The white cows that were ritually killed for *Nyabatama* were to be eaten by the lions, *ebyamagashani*, 'of the tombs', who remained with the drum in *Kagondo*. Only *ente ya kitare* were selected for *Nyabatama*, because the lions, *entare*, in *Kagondo*, believed to embody the ancestors of the old kings, who during life could only eat the meat of white cows, could in turn eat only flesh from white cows:

Taliho ente ndijo yabaire nelibwa n'Omukama, anga n'amata gayo talikuganywa. Kityo ente y'amabara etali ya kitare telikulibwa n'esimba, anga Mukama

'There is no other cow that would be eaten by the king or milk from any other cow he would drink. Therefore, cows that are not white, *kitare*, would neither be eaten by the king or the lion.'[32]

Nowhere else in the entire region have I found such an explicit connection between the white cow *kitare* and the lion *entare*. The king, returning after death as a lion, must still drink milk from white cows.[33] Lions, as ancestors of kings, feed on flesh from white cows. The symbolic pattern around the root *-tare* associated with sacredness can be proposed to reflect socio-economic power structures combining the power of iron-working with wealth in cattle:

en-tare, 'lion'
bu-tare, 'iron-ore'
ki-tare, 'the white cow'

We have already encountered the white cow called by the name *Kitare* in a Kyamutwara kingship ritual. As will be demonstrated below the *Kitare* name of the white cow reoccurs in kingship traditions recorded among the Bahaya and in Karagwe. The task of immediate concern is to find out the historical roots of the *Bahima/Bahuma* aristocracy in Rutara-speaking people's social reality. The problem of *Bahima/Bahuma* origins is closely related to the problem of the *Bacwezi*.

The *Bacwezi* in the Archaeology of Western Uganda

The analysis here will focus on the *Bacwezi* mentioned retrospectively as kings. Their historical existence must be examined within the framework of archaeological findings in the dry savannah corridor of Western Uganda.[34] However, the correlation of an ancient *Bacwezi* "dynasty" with the impressive earthworks in the *Bigo* area on the southern banks of the Katonga has been considered problematic. The question of whether several of the sites in *Bwera*[35] and *Mubende*,[36] which are at present cult centres revering *Bacwezi* spirits, have an original association with *Bacwezi* "... as kings of a supposed ancient dynasty or merely as spirits of the land–remains unsatisfactorily answered" (Sutton 1993:45).

Posnansky (1966:4), following Oliver (1964), accepted the *Bacwezi* as "a parent dynasty" breaking up on the impact of Luo movements. Currently, there is scholarly agreement on the Luo origin of the *Babiito* dynasties in Bunyoro, Tooro, Kiziba and Bugufi (cf. Tantala 1989:105). As Oliver (1964) has remarked and as will be demonstrated below, both Kinyoro of the *Babiito* and Kinyankore of the *Bahinda* court traditions claim direct descent from a "parent *Bacwezi* dynasty". More recently, Sutton (1998:42) has expressed the view that this claim could be seen as "an unduly imaginative manipulation of the traditions as remembered or recorded". But I do not think it is correct to say that traditions vital to the *Babiito* ideology of kingship were "manipulated". Before any Europeans came along to record the traditions, the *Babiito* had created them as a necessary element in their quest for legitimacy.

In line with Oliver, Posnansky contended that it was the *Bacwezi* who had left the archaeological remains in Uganda, *Bigo bya Mugenyi*,

'the cattle enclosures of the stranger', and other earthworks renowned for impressive trench systems, mounds, earth dams and reservoirs. On the basis of the "consistent and widely held traditions of Bunyoro and Nkore", (cf. Karugire 1971:120) Posnansky (1966:5) accepted the correlation of a "Bigo culture"[37] to the *Bacwezi*. Judging from the then available results of excavations at *Bigo*, Posnansky suggested that "the Bigo culture was the work of people akin to the present day Bahima". This book will demonstrate that specialised cattle keepers were not responsible for the creation of any presumed "Bigo culture" but took part in the process of change that brought new political developments to the region.

The scale of the *Bigo* undertaking[38] would suggest "rulers with a firm control over a relatively large manpower, such as would be possessed by a ruler of a centralised state" (Posnansky 1966:5). The whole construct and its location, including good grazing lands on riverbanks, indicate that its makers had intended it to protect large herds of cattle. Situated at the centre of *Bigo*, an enclosure bank estimated to have been more than 30m high has been interpreted as a royal enclosure, *orirembo*, of the type that survived in Nkore, Rwanda and Karagwe until the late nineteenth century. The size of the remaining post-holes that Shinnie (1960:18) had excavated in 1957 provides some idea of the scale of the structure. Posnansky (1966:9) thought that particular find held a clue to the origins of centralised government in the area. Sutton (1998:41) has suggested that *Bwera* could have constituted a kingdom, in which *Bigo* played a central role. That kingdom could "in a very general way" have pioneered the institutions of kingship. In the first place, the new evidence that will be brought to bear on this problem will demonstrate instead that *Bigo* has nothing to do with the rise of kingship institutions, but rather with the loss of kingship. Secondly, *Bwera* did not exist as a kingdom at the time when *Bigo* was populated.

Reid (1991) carried out more recent excavations at the adjacent site of *Ntusi*. He estimates that *Ntusi* was occupied from perhaps as early as the 10th until about the 15th centuries (Sutton 1998:41).[39] No new excavations have as yet been undertaken at Bigo. Judging from the

similarities of the pottery from *Bigo* and *Ntusi* Sutton (1993:50) suggests an overall dating of the occupation of Bigo and the construction of the earthworks from about the 13th to the 16th century.[40]

Schmidt (1990:259) looks in vain for precise references to the *Bacwezi* in connection with the name *Mugenyi*, to whom the enclosures are attributed. He (1990:264) argues that archaeological excavations at *Bigo* had been undertaken with the view to verify the alleged *Bacwezi* oral traditions, a project he deemed "fraught with problems from its inception. It was based on a false premise derived from a distorted and seriously misinterpreted body of oral traditions". He quotes Wayland's (1934) article containing the earliest report (1909) on "Ancient Forts", written by a former District Commissioner named D.L. Baines. One of the few points Schmidt cites (Wayland 1934:22) is derived from "Banyoro oral traditions" claiming that a Munyoro "chief named Nalubongoya erected the fortifications as a precaution against attempts by the Banyoro to recover the royal cattle that had been stolen". Schmidt (1990:259) may have been aware that he might have struck the heart of the matter when bringing up the aspect of cattle raiding as a reason why the entrenchments at *Bigo* had been constructed. But he did not mention that "certain Bahima of Mawogola" (Wayland 1934:22) are said to have transferred this "Bunyoro tradition". The following questions arise. Were those who transferred the tradition offspring to those who built the trench systems? And who stole whose cattle? Possible answers to these problems lie in the traditions interpreted from within the context of the interlacustrine peoples themselves.

Likewise, Reid's position on the issue of archaeological correlation with oral traditions about the *Bacwezi* "dynasty" is negative. He does not believe that the *Bacwezi* traditions are a product of state ideology. The *Bigo-Ntusi* region had been deserted or sparsely populated for some time until resettled during the last century (Reid 1991:71-79, Sutton 1993:53). He claims that recent population influx could have brought or created the *Bacwezi* traditions existing today that allude to Ntusi and its vicinity in the past.[41] In a similar vein Sutton (1998:42) derives the association between the *Mucwezi Mugenyi* and *Bigo* to a likely

"'invention' or guess offered early in the twentieth century by Baganda moving into this district" in response to the demand for historical explanations for these impressive works from British administrators. Neither Reid nor Sutton take into account that culture and history are not limited to any small area but rather represent a shared heritage in the region. Variations of the *Bacwezi* traditions are not geographically confined but known by certain knowledgeable Rutara-speaking elders wherever they move within the region. The traditions most certainly are the product of state ideology, but as will be argued, not the state centred at *Bigo*.

Kamuhangire (1993:102-103, 1995:95) speculated that the *Bacwezi* were spirits only and saw the *Ntusi* settlement, which is the oldest of all these related sites, as the remains of a ritual centre of "the Kitara cultural region in which a Cwezi cult of hero-worship developed between the 11th and 16th centuries A.D." He denies the existence of the "Empire of Kitara", which Banyoro court historians like Nyakatura (1947/1973) had accredited to the *Bacwezi* as ancestors of the *Babiito* dynasty of Bunyoro. He correctly deems Bunyoro-Kitara a late invention. But it is likely that some political entity would have directed these monumental works that occur, not just at *Bigo*, but throughout the grasslands of Uganda.

Peter Robertshaw (1997:3) led excavations of the earthworks at *Munsa* about 60 kilometres north of *Bigo*. He echoes the current position of *Bacwezi* research: "historians have now undermined the notion of a Cwezi state". Robertshaw holds that "the archaeological evidence of the earthworks can still be interpreted as indicative of an ancient state, albeit one decoupled from the Bacwezi". To him it is not clear that the very substantial labour input required for the trenches at *Bigo* "could have been mobilised only within a state-level society". But one wonders why scholars dismiss the *Bacwezi* connection with the impressive archaeological remains within the frame-work of an ancient state in this part of the world, when local historians and elders agree on the issue. *Bahima* elders in the cattle land of Nyabushozi naturally place the *Bacwezi* in the geographical context of *Ntusi* and *Bigo* and surrounding areas south of the Katonga River.

The exposition of texts that follows sheds new light on the *Bacwezi* problem, connecting ancient kings to *Bigo* with its great ramparts and deep cuts. The origin of the name *Bacwezi* will be explored later.

History in *Bacwezi* Traditions

Told as a vital element in *Babiito/Bahinda* state ideology, the court "myth-makers" conflate the roles of the *Bacwezi* as kings and spirits of kings, spirits they need to appease to safeguard their own legitimacy. Moreover, like the reflection in a mirror presents a reverse picture of reality, all Kinyoro sources of the *Babiito* as well as traditions told by the *Bahima* in Mbarara district offer the sequence of events in the *Bacwezi* traditions in reverse. Thus in the official standard version produced by the *Babiito* and in versions transferred by the *Bahima*, *Wamara* assumes the role of the last *Mucwezi*, the youngest one.

The method employed in the exercise of interpreting history from *Bacwezi* traditions would appear obvious to anybody familiar with the interlacustrine culture. Nevertheless, this is the first attempt to systematise the study of names here. It is important to remember that the names in the traditions do not represent individual human beings, but should be regarded as symbols. I will demonstrate that names in the traditions can be personifications of groups of people, events or a process of social change. The key rule to arrange the events in a straightforward historical sequence is to translate the names in relation to specific references to symbols of kingship like the *Kitare* cow and to holes in the ground, which can be symbolically associated with archaeological remains in the region. When translated, the names can provide guidelines to place the events in their historical sequence.[42]

The Ihangiro tradition about the fall of *Wamara* will set the scene. Here the *Basiita* emerge as rulers.

Wamara and the Loss of Kingship: the Ihangiro Tradition

Katoke (1975:16-17) had not been able to obtain any precise information from the *Basiita* themselves about the reason why their clan had been recognised as a ruling clan. Nevertheless he ascertained

that *Basiita* ruler-ship is known "all over Ankole, Karagwe and other Buhaya states". On close scrutiny of available *Bacwezi* source material, a plausible explanation for the emergence of *Basiita* state power can be deciphered from a tradition Father Césard (1927:447-453) recorded in the old Buhaya kingdom of Ihangiro. It is presented under the heading: "The legend about *Wamara*, introduction to the history of the country". The ruling *Bahinda* clan transferred this tradition; only the big people of the country, *les grands du pays seuls*, knew its details (Césard 1927:453).[43] Its content is multi-level. As far as I know, this is the most detailed recorded tradition about the fall of *Wamara* and the origin of "his" role as a *Mucwezi* spirit. But it does not only explain how *Wamara* emerges as a *Mucwezi* spirit, it can also shed new light on the exceptional position of the *Basiita*.

Told from the perspective of the old Buhaya kingdom of Ihangiro south of the Kagera River, this court tradition must be interpreted within the wider interlacustrine context of Rutara-speaking people's "religious vision of the world", their belief system, socio-economic as well as political reality. Compared to *Bacwezi* beliefs and traditions expressed and told among the *Bahima* in the physical environment of the dry grassland corridor of Western Uganda, it can yield valuable information about the fall of a despotic king named *Wamara*. Here follows a partly summarised translation from Luhaya compared to Césard's French rendition, including the most important points in Luhaya:

> *Wamara* built nine[44] houses; when they were ready he moved in together with his subjects. His two chiefs, *abakungu*, were *Irungu* and *Mugasha*.
>
> Once they heard a jackal bellow in the night and the following morning *Wamara*, *Irungu* and *Mugasha* with their dogs and men set out to kill it. Their dogs were running the whole day to track it down.
> Finally the dogs, the king, *Irungu* and *Mugasha* followed the jackal through a hole in the ground, *kinai*. They came out into a completely unknown country, the country of *Kintu*, son of *Igaba*, *bashohora, omunsi eyo batalikumanya, omwa Kintu kya Igaba* (Césard 1927:448).

Ki-ntu kya Igaba as Agent of the People

The reference *Kintu kya Igaba*, '*Kintu*, son of *Igaba*', is important, because here the dynastic "myth-makers" and state ideologists in Ihangiro use the name *Igaba* to connect the *Kintu* persona to the Bunyoro centre of creation. But the names *Irungu* and *Mugasha* place *Wamara* in the socio-economic context of "grandfathers of kings". The name *Ki-ntu* is compounded of the amplicative prefix *ki-* for 'thing'[45] and the root of *mu-ntu*, 'a person' (Rascher 1958:4). The meaning of the name of the king of the "unknown country", *Kintu*, indicates that "he" in the Ihangiro tradition should be interpreted as a personification of "the people", *aba-ntu*.[46] According to the interlacustrine people's belief system, the "unknown country" accessible through a hole in the ground can be identified as the Underworld, the "invisible" world or the land of the spirits, *Okuzimu*.[47] *Kintu*'s kingdom appears as a land of unknown riches:

> Here they saw cows and goats; they did not know about them because they did not exist in their country.
>
> The jackal entered the royal enclosure, *kikare*, followed by the dogs and men and arrived at the king's house, *enju ruguru*. The courtiers seized the dogs, *Mugasha* and *Irungu* stayed at the entrance, *omu kishasi*, *Wamara* stayed behind in the passage leading to the entrance, *irembo*.

Kintu asked *Irungu* and *Mugasha* where they came from. They explained how they had found their way to *Kintu*'s kingdom.

Meanwhile *Wamara* stood waiting in *Nyarulembo*, the access way to the royal enclosure. *Omukama Kintu* sent a messenger to approach *Wamara*. *Wamara* asked him where his men and his dogs were. The messenger said that he had left them in the presence of the king. The messenger returned to his master and told him.

Kintu sent the messenger again to return *Wamara*'s dogs and men and tell him: "I am *Omukama Kintu*, I command you not to go back home; *nkutunge*, 'I want to look after you'." He gave him a house.

Social Stratification Staged by *Kintu kya Igaba*

> They brought banana beer, *amarwa*. *Wamara* asked *Mugasha* to taste. When *Mugasha* had tasted he vomited, so *Wamara* told *Irungu* to taste. When *Irungu* had tasted he said, "My Lord, *waitu*, this is a drink for a king, *nkorogo*, please drink". *Wamara* drank. Then they brought goat's meat and cooked bananas, *ebitoke*. *Mugasha* tasted and vomited. *Wamara* told *Irungu* to taste. When *Irungu* had tasted he said, "*Waitu*, this is food for a king, *nkorogo*,[48] please eat".
> Then they brought the white cow *Kitare*. When they saw it they got so afraid that they thought it would kill them.

The reaction of fear at the first sight of the white cow is an indication that *Kitare* should be interpreted as a symbol of the sacred kingship drum (Farelius 1978:20).[49]

> A *Mushengya*, a *Musiita* and a girl brought the cow. They milked the cow. The girl served the milk, *yaleta kubonekya*. *Wamara* told *Irungu*, "From now on you are the one to taste. *Mugasha* is an idiot!" When *Irungu* had tasted the milk he said, "*Waitu*, of all we have been offered, this is the best" (Césard 1927:449).

A man of the *Basiita* clan is messenger of *Kintu*, the King of the Underworld, whose name indicates that "he" is or symbolises the Great Ancestor representing "the People". *Kintu kya Igaba* decides the destiny of *Wamara*, *Irungu* and *Mugasha*. The role of *Mugasha* vomiting the beer and not even being entrusted to taste the milk makes "him" appear as *Kairu*, 'the little serf'. As will be shown below. *Kairu* figures in the Milk Test traditions administered by the *Babiito* in Bunyoro denoting a category of origin traditions that justify social stratification attested for a number of interlacustrine kingdoms. On the ground of this piece of evidence, the Ihangiro tradition can be said to contain a version of the Milk Test that mirrors local socio-economic structures in *Bahinda/Babiito*-led old kingdoms south of the Kagera. *Mugasha* would here assume the role of *Kairu*, while *Irungu*, associated with iron-working and close to the king, represents *Kahima*, 'the little herdsman'. All sources combined, it is reasonable to conclude that, in the specific socio-

economic context of the Ihangiro old kingdom in Buhaya, the status of the *Bahima* aristocracy is determined by the control of metallurgy and iron-working skills.[50]

Kitare, Wamara's Favourite Cow

> When the king had drunk the milk he said to the girl, "*Ikara aha, nagonza Kitare*, stay here, I love *Kitare*".

Judging from the overall weight of the evidence the white cow *Kitare* represents kingship. The superior role attributed to *Irungu*, who is known as the patron of iron-working, strengthens the argument that the name of the cow is symbolically associated with the Bantu root **-tare*, 'iron ore'. *Wamara* wanted to stay near the cow–"he" loved the white cow.

King *Kintu* had his messenger ask them if really all these things did not exist at their place. *Wamara* explained that they did not have anything of the sort, because theirs was a poor country.

During the nine days they spent in *Kintu*'s kingdom, *Mugasha* did not eat anything; but he went to the fields and picked seeds of all kind of vegetables and dried them.

Kintu's Gifts Granted as a Loan

> Then king *Kintu* asked his servants to gather cows and goats to give *Wamara*. He also selected two of his men and a girl 'of a clan that served at the king's table', *bakaba bali babonekya owa Mukama*.[51]
>
> The king told *Wamara* through his messenger that now he could depart with the cows and goats. The king had also given him three of his servants; when they had shown all the gifts to *Wamara*'s people he should send them back. Afterwards he should not forget to thank *Kintu* who had been so generous. *Wamara* set out for home with all the herds, *amagana*, which he had been given as a gift.
> *Mugasha* followed them with all the seeds he had gathered. ... When they reached the hole, *ekinai*, it was too narrow, so *Mugasha* had to widen it before they could pass with the herds.
> The people stood waiting at the hole ready to greet their king, but when they saw the cows they got afraid and moved away to watch these miraculous creatures from a distance.

When *Wamara* and his men had reached the royal enclosure, *kikare*, they had the cow *Kitare* milked and the king drank the milk and asked for more to give his men. They churned butter from the milk and rubbed their bodies with the butter, admiring one another's beauty.
Wamara said, "But I tell you, when *Kitare* dies, I will die too, *Kyonkai Kitare eki k'elifa, ndifa nayo*" (Césard 1927:451).

If *Kitare* is the symbol of the kingship drum and the cow died–the king had to die with the cow.

Then he had his elder brother *Lyangombe* herd his cattle.

In Kyamutwara *Lyangombe* is regarded as "the spirit of the cow", and *Lyangombe*'s cow is named *Kitare*: *Kitare ya Lyangombe*, a name that can be interpreted as a reference to the distant past.[52]

Mugasha told his wife *Nakalembe* to prepare fields for cultivation and he himself took a hoe and sowed vast fields. In this way they lived for years. *Wamara* forgot his benefactor, he did not send back what he had been given as a loan, but had the hole filled in.

Plate 11. *Omukama* Rukamba's white cow, *Kitare,* facing the shrine of Lyangombe, "the spirit of the cow". Note the *omugorora* planted in front of it.

The *Omukama's* young daughter keeps the *ekyanzi* milk pot ready for the royal morning meal.

Kintu Sends *Rufu*, 'Death', to Punish *Wamara*

When King Kintu had been waiting in vain for *Wamara* to bring back his herds, he said, "Why doesn't the man, whom I have given so much come back? At least he could have sent my men!

Ayakugenda kumunyagira ebyange, ka yakwija nakumutunga, 'the man who went down to raid my cattle, still, at his departure, I gave him for free what he wanted!'" (César 1927:451)

If *Kintu* personifies the people and *Wamara* symbolises a king that raided cattle from the people, then *Wamara* would have violated the basic redistribution principles inherent to the *-gab-* kingship.

So *Kintu* sent *Rufu*, 'Death', to reclaim all the cattle that were still alive and the hides of those which had died. At this *Wamara* got embarrassed and wanted to flog *Rufu*.

A Woman of the People Rescues *Rufu*

Rufu ran away and was eventually rescued by the female servant whom *Wamara* had received from *Kintu*. This was a girl *Rufu* recognised from home.

When *Rufu* saw the herdsmen who took *Kitare* to the pasture, he followed them. Mixing with the herders he kept waiting for the right moment. He managed to catch the cow and throw it in a hole full of water, *iziba*.[53] *Rufu* went to *Wamara* and told him, "Your herdsmen have killed *Kitare*". The king said, "That's a lie!" "I swear by your face, it's not a lie", *Rufu* replied. When the king's men heard this they said, "The king had sworn that when *Kitare* dies I will kill myself, hasn't his time come now?"
The king heard this and told *Rufu*, "Come, show me where the cow has fallen down". He took him to the hole and the king asked for a long stick. They brought the stick and tried in vain to reach the bottom. Then *Wamara* threw himself into the hole together with *Irungu* and all his councillors, *abaramata*.
When *Wamara* and his men had sunk into the ground, his people were shocked by the death of their king. But the official in charge of the procedure, *Mushobozi*,[54] stood up and comforted them thus: 'Our king cannot abandon

> his people; let us build three houses and see if he comes back.' So they built three houses and nine days afterwards the spirit of *Wamara* came back and possessed *Omushengya* (a man from the *Bashengya* clan). Also *Irungu* and *Mugasha* became *Bacwezi* spirits and 'all their riches returned back to them', *ebihingire byona byagaruka byabo*.[55]

> Then after *Wamara* had died *Omusiita* ruled together with *Omushengya*, the medium of *Wamara Omusiita yatwara, n'Omushengya embandwa ya Wamara lyatwara hamoi* (Césard 1927:453).

The Ihangiro tradition explains the fundamental role of *Wamara* in the *Bacwezi* system of combined political and spiritual kingship. Accordingly, the spirit of *Wamara* possessed *Omushengya*, a name derived from the root of the verb *kushenga*, 'to serve a new master';[56] the new master being *Wamara*. In Kiswahili *mushenga* is a person who arranges betrothals between one group and another, so the role of *Omushengya* could be interpreted as mediator between the new master and the people, which on another level could be understood as the link between the invisible and the visible world.[57] Hence *Omushengya* (the causative transitive form of *kushenga*) is given the position of the priest, *embandwa*, who mediates the messages from "the new ruler", the *Mucwezi Wamara*. The *Musiita* ruled, but not alone, "he" was stipulated to rule together with *Omushengya*, the priest, *embandwa* of *Wamara*.

But the root *-shenga* also means 'rebel'.[58] *Musiita* is messenger of *Kintu*. If *Kintu* is a personification of the people, then the *Basiita* served the people. As will be further clarified in the following, it could be argued that the people, led by the *Basiita*, threw out those who came to be called *Bacwezi*.

What follows next is an explanation of the name of the hole, where the *Kitare* cow and *Wamara* perished, allegedly together with many people:

> and they called the hole, *iziba*, *Imara*, because it finished off a whole crowd of people (Césard 1927:447-452).[59]

Imara: The Best Grazing Land of the *Bacwezi*

Now the question is where is *Imara* located; if at all it is a geographic place[60]. I turned to *Bahima* elders in the former kingdom of Nkore. An elder of the *Basingo* clan in a Kinyankore cattle enclosure deep inside Nyabushozi, Rwanda Rwera,[61] said *Imara* was "the land of the *Bacwezi*":

> *Imara* is a place near Kanjunju and Kanjunju is near *Ebigo bya Mugenyi* near *Ntusi*. *Imara* and *Ntusi* are the lands of the *Bacwezi*. It was their best grazing land and they guarded it jealously. It is said that up to now, no one has ever succeeded in building a house in this area. Whoever starts, for some reason, never finishes.[62]

The old man answered the question without a moment's hesitation, and it is obvious that he believed that *Imara*, derived from *ku-mara*, 'to finish', represented an identifiable location, associated with an ancient "dynasty" perceived as *Bacwezi*. *I-mara* brought down the "dynasty" whose finish *Wa-mara* personifies.[63] But if the *Babiito* state ideologists created the concept of a *Bacwezi dynasty* to whom they link themselves as immediate heirs, we have to analyse it from within the framework of interlacustrine people's belief system. The world of spirits mirrors the material world. Therefore, it should be no surprise that to the inhabitants of the region *Imara* refers to any number of pits[64] and as the abode of the dead.[65] But the most obvious geographic location of *Imara* should be *Bigo*. Mzee Patrick Kirindi, a local historian, said that *Bigo* (from *ebigo*, 'cattle enclosures') is fortresses stronger than cattle enclosures.[66]

Popular Discontent

The construction of the defensive earthworks in the grasslands would have placed an immense burden on those responsible for the execution of this task. The extent of the earthworks suggests that cattle no longer resided in the vicinity of householders but were concentrated within the extensive enclosures. Oliver (1953:136) concluded that whoever was responsible for these endeavours had monopolised the wealth of the country, leading in turn to popular discontent.

The Fight Between *Kagoro* and *Misango*

The episode about the fight between *Kagoro* and *Misango* may reveal that the people rejected the repressive behaviour of the *Bacwezi* by stealing their cattle. *-sang* means 'to bring a case at law' (Schoenbrun 1997:153), i.e., *Misango* is "the personification of contestation".[67] Mrs Fisher's version:

> Now, there was a certain man named Misango, who conceived a plot for stealing all the cattle of the Bacwezi, which were herded together and placed under the care of Kagoro. But the man feared Kagoro, the Mucwezi, for he was powerful and fearless. One day, however, Kagoro went away to visit the home of his mother-in-law; then Misango, seizing his opportunity, plundered the cattle, also the barkcloths and coronets of the Bacwezi (Fisher 1911/1970:104).

Misango, the personification of contestation, appears to have tried legal means against *Bacwezi* violation of the redistribution principles inherent to the *-gab-* kingship ideology. *Kagoro*, on "his" part, defended the *Bacwezi*. Just as *Misango*, the name *Kagoro* has a meaning connected to legal procedures and laws. The root *-goro-* is derived from *ku-goro-ra*, heard in a prayer accompanying the purifying herb *omugororo*[68] at Karagwe royal installations and burials, *agorore eihangalye*, 'so that he may lead his people on the righteous path'.[69] From the perspective of the people the personification of *Kagoro*, however, does not do justice to the ideal of the righteous ruler:

> ... Kagoro armed himself with a spear and hastened off towards Ankole, where Misango had taken refuge. When he encountered the man, he challenged him thus, "If you do not want me to kill you, kill me"; whereupon Misango ran towards him and flung two spears, which only, however, grazed his knee. Then Kagoro raised his spear, and, with a straight aim, flung it at Misango, so that it entered his shoulder, and he died. [...] After killing many people, he got back all the cattle that had been stolen, and returned home to his father, Mugenyi (Fisher 1911/1970:105).

"The people tried to get their cattle back by traditional legal means and *died* for that attempt."[70]

The Milk Turned Red–the origin of the *Obusito* totem

The accounts of the *Bacwezi* reflect increasing problems. During the reign of *Wamara,* bad omens began to appear.

The Death of *Ka-ntu*, Personification of *Wamara's* Subjects

The series of ominous episodes that precipitates the decline and fall of *Wamara* starts with the accounts about *Kantu*. Kinyoro (Nyakatura 1973:34) sources relate that *Wamara* had a blood brother called *Ka-ntu*, literally 'the little guy'. In other words, "he" personifies *Wamara*'s subjects, the common people, who dared to approach the king, may be to voice "his" discontent. The fact that "his" death was caused by a bull argues for cattle being the matter at stake:[71]

> One day *Kantu* paid a visit to his friend *Wamara*, but found him all prepared to go out hunting. *Wamara* ordered one of his servants to show *Kantu* to the house and to request his wives to look after him properly until his return. But the king's wives despised the little old man. They merely laughed at him and ignored *Wamara*'s orders. They even refused to allow him to stay inside the house. Instead, they ordered the servant to deposit him in one of the outer huts, where food and drink could be brought to him. Having carried out his instructions, the servant rejoined the king's hunting expedition. Meanwhile, the king's wives went about their business and forgot all about *Kantu*. Neither the food nor the drink was therefore offered him. When he became very hungry, he staggered out of the hut to see by which way the hunters might be returning. As he came out he saw a bull and a cow making love. When the bull noticed *Kantu* it charged at him and kicked him to death.[72]
>
> On his return *Wamara* inquired about his friend. Nobody seemed to know what had happened to him. The king was very angry and put the blame on his wives. At last his dead body was discovered lying outside the outer huts. The king was furious when this news was broken to him. But nobody foresaw what would happen next.
>
> The following morning the herdsmen went to milk the cows and then discovered to their horror that the milk had changed colour, turning into *mutara* [red milk]. Whereupon they consulted the witch doctors, who solved the mystery by declaring: "*Wamara*'s blood brother relationship with *Kantu* has caused the milk to change into *mutara*." It was therefore

> decided that this blood brotherhood [bond of friendship] must be loosened in the traditional fashion. This was done and after four days the cows began producing normal milk once more.
>
> From now onwards, the *Bachwezi* decided to avoid the *obusito* [milk that is from a cow that is with a calf] totem (Nyakatura 1974:33-34).

The milk turned red, *mu-tara*, which in symbolic terms could be retrospectively understood as a sign implying danger to *Ki-tara*,[73] the great kingdom that later dynasties attributed to a "dynasty" they called *Bacwezi*. But the literal translation of *mutara* is 'cattle disease' in Runyankore, not in Rukiga (Taylor 1959:117). This translation appears to imply a straightforward explanation to the problems that unsettled the *Bacwezi*. They kept for themselves, in an enclosure, the cattle that the people had given as a loan. Crowded together rather than being spread out and moved frequently, cattle would be predisposed to disease.[74] There are at least three diseases that cause bloody, i.e., red milk. Those are infectious *mastitis*, *leptospirosis* and *anthrax*.[75]

The Appearance of "Evil Creatures", *otu-ntu*

The *Ka-ntu* episode is followed by the appearance of "evil creatures", *otu-ntu*:

> Seven[76] evil creatures, *otuntu mushanju*, had visited them. These were strange creatures, one was one-eyed, the other had one leg, the other was toothless and the other had a clipped arm. The *Abacwezi* had asked them what they were and they had said that they were evils. They said that they had come to stay. *Kagoro* shot six of them but one escaped and it is said that the evil turned and looked at him and told him it would return either as a beautiful girl, or a cow or something else beautiful and would kill him.[77]

The class prefix *otu-* in *otu-ntu* denotes the plural dimunitive (Rascher 1958:35). This means that *otu-ntu* is plural of *Ka-ntu*, 'the little guy'. *Otuntu*, in this case meaning "little guys" could be "personification of disaffected people".[78] The stink mentioned in the following version could be of rotting carcasses.

> Often when at a meal or when drinking, invisible beings would dash between *Bacwezi* coughing, shouting and rattling. Even when their cows went for water, these same beings frightened them so that at times the cows returned without a drink. Eventually king *Wamara*, while in Mahogora had a terrible incident. Seven evil beings entered his house in broad daylight and filled it with a foul-smell as the odour emitted by a civet cat. People could not breathe properly. *Kagoro*, son of *Kyomya*, sent them so that he could examine some movement that cows were drinking water. *Kagoro* actually killed five of the evil beings, the two remaining. One took refuge in the river. He chased them to the bank and there killed the male evil. The female one crossed the river before he reached it. From the other side of the river the evil said to him, "Even if you have killed all my neighbours I am only going to return at a later date and I shall be here to damage everything belonging to the *Bacwezi*. *Kagoro* returned and told the story to the rest of the *Abacwezi*. It only added to their confusion.[79]

Stressing that this tradition is related to the consequences of cattle disease Mzee P. Kirindi[80] ended by saying: "Note that to date Banyankore never drink milk from a cow until after four days from the time it has calved". The *Bacwezi* clan in Bunyoro respects the *Obusito* totem, milk from a cow four days after calving or mating.[81] So do the *Basiita* in for example Bunyoro (H.K. Karubanga 1948) and Buhaya: Kyamutwara.[82]

Revival of Dying Herds

The consistent message that death of special cows would bring death to *Wamara/Mugenyi* echoes in court traditions recorded for Buhaya and Bunyoro as well as in traditions told by *Bahima* spokesmen for the old kingdom of Nkore. In accordance with local socio-economic power structures the Ihangiro tradition depicts *Wamara*'s favourite cow as white, *Kitare*. *Wamara* said, "But I tell you, when *Kitare* dies, I will die too, *Kyonkai Kitare eki k'elifa, ndifa nayo*". Kinyoro sources relate that *Mugenyi* had two cows "he" loved very much, *Bihogo* and *Rusasa*, 'of suffering' (Runyoro). "He" swore that "he would kill anyone who destroyed them and would kill himself if they died a natural death: *Ekiriita ente zange zinu na nyowe ndikiita; obu zirifa kwonka ndyeita*" (Nyakatura 1973:37 and 1947:53, Runyoro version). When *Bihogo* expired at a salt lick his brothers barely prevented *Mugenyi* from carrying out his threat (Beattie 1971:48).

Bahima informants I interviewed over fifteen years ago recounted traditions about *Wamara*'s favourite cow alternatively *Bihogo bya Mpuuga*[83] or *Miringoigana Byarushasha* (Runyankore), 'large herds of many types that were of the time of suffering'.[84] The latter quite literally embodies the disaster at *Bigo*, which would spark off a process of social and political change in the region. The versions of two *Bahima* elders conflate the names *Bihogo* and *Miringoigana*. Mzee I. Katuuka's version starts with the episode about the thin and weak *Kahuuga* cow that was dug up from deep in the ground:

> [...] *Wamara* went to *Bwera* in Ntusi, Masaka. Then while he was eating coffee beans one bean fell and started disappearing into the ground. He told his men to get it. They tried to dig it up but it went deeper and deeper and they dug on until they came across a cow's horn and dug and pulled out a whole cow. It was a very thin, weak *Kahuuga* [diminutive of *Mpuuga*[85]] cow.

If we accept for the sake of argument that the hole in the ground symbolises the entrenchments at *Bigo*, then the history is barely encoded at all. The description of *Kahuuga* is exactly what would be expected in a weathered cow, which is one that has survived disease. The suggestion that the abandonment of *Bigo*, the end of the first occupation (cf. Posnansky 1969:135), could have followed an epizootic calamity is plausible. But the history that appears to be embedded in the brief episode recounted here does not end with the mere explanation of the abandonment of *Bigo*:

> *Wamara* gave *Kahuuga* to some *Abaitira*[86] boys and told them to take it to Sembabule. The *Bacwezi* urged the boys not to allow it to mate. But one day *some other herdsmen* [my italics] were passing by with a bull and the bull immediately climbed *Kahuuga* and they mated. *Kahuuga* later calved a beautiful heifer, *Kahogo*.[87]

The episode also demonstrates how the herds were rebuilt, which in turn explains why this heartrending tragedy did not entail the immediate demise of the *Bacwezi*. The "other herdsmen ... passing by with a bull" could have been specialised cattle keepers on the move looking for new pastures.

In another version told by Mzee Elfaz Rwoya, the cow from deep in the ground was *Bihogo*, who in turn gave birth to *Miringoigana*, the calf that "had many colours". Cattle terminology that has been reconstructed to a time period from at least AD 1000 (Schoenbrun 1993b:48), possibly predating the influx of long-horned large cattle, suggests the priority of cattle of many colours. This version confirms the conclusion above and explains how the herds were rebuilt–by crossing cattle that were ancient in the region with a different and possibly new variety:

> *Wamara* loved *Bihogo* very much and gave it to his son, *Mugenyi*, to tend. He instructed him that if/when it died *Mugenyi* should burn it[88] and bring him some of the ashes.
> With time this cow *Bihogo* gave birth to *Miringoigana Byarushasha*. The calf had many colours; *Bihogo, Ngabo, Kyozi, Nkara, Mayenje, Gaaju*.[89] It was big and tall. *Bihogo* died after calving and *Mugenyi* did as his father instructed him. He burnt it all and took some of its ashes to his father. *Miringoigana* therefore had to feed from other cows because its own mother had died. This is what is referred to as *okusiigirira*. The calf fed from ten different cows continually. It fed from one, when that one's milk dried up it fed from a second one and so on. So the calf grew and *Mugenyi* kept it as a secret. Nobody else knew that *Bihogo* had calved so only *Mugenyi* knew. He fed the calf in secret and kept it hidden.
> When *Miringoigana* was big and weaned, *Mugenyi* brought it to his father. *Wamara* loved it at once. It became his special cow. Later it joined other cows and calved many times and used to give a lot of milk. One day, however, it ate too much salt and got intoxicated by it. They tried to revive it but they failed. Eventually it died. But *Mugasha*, one of *Wamara*'s sons, was not in. He had gone to Butumbi.[90] *Ruhinda* also had gone to Karagwe.

When *Miringoigana* died, *Wamara* was so distressed that he, together with the rest of the *Abacwezi* threw himself in the lake called *Obwegoromoro* (Lake *Wamara*) and disappeared. When *Mugasha* returned he never found anyone and then he saw *Miringoigana*'s dead body at Kagango. He butchered it, ate it and dried some of the meat. He then walked on to Masaka and drowned in a lake now known as *Ekikori kya Mugasha*.[91]

Mzee I. Katuuka, in his version, first names the favourite cow that dies *Bihogo bya Mpuuga*:

> *Mugenyi* took great care of the young calf, gave it plenty of milk and it grew into a beautiful heifer. Later it calved and gave plenty of milk so that all the *Bacwezi* drank of it. *Bihogo* now became a favourite cow. It was referred to as *Bihogo bya Mpuuga*.
>
> However, one day *Bihogo* ate a lot of salt and got intoxicated by it. The *Bacwezi* tried very hard to revive it but it was in vain. *Wamara* came and held it fondly as he sang a song with *Bararemwe* (their main royal drum) beside the cow.

Then the name of the dying cow, in the song that follows, shifts from *Bihogo* to *Miringo*, short for *Miringoigana*, 'large herds of many types'.

Sinduka	Revive
Sinduka Miringo	Revive *Miringo*
Sinduka Miringoigana	Revive *Miringoigana*
Ya Ruchenche	Of *Ruchenche*
Wajumika Barichengwa	Or you destroy *Barichengwa*
Sinduka	Revive
Sinduka Miringo	Revive *Miringo*
Sinduka Miringoigana	Revive *Miringoigana*
Ya Ruchenche	Of *Ruchenche*
Wajumika Bararemwe	Or you destroy *Bararemwe*

The lament for the loss of the herds of many colours concludes with the phrase "or you destroy *Bararemwe*".[92] Mzee Katuuka, after reciting the lament, pointed out carefully that *Bararemwe* named the drum at the side of the dying cow. Tying the drum to the dying of many herds *Miringoigana* proves that this is a story about kingship. The name *Bara-rem-we* may be translated 'they will fail', the stem *-rem-* in Runyankore implying loss and failure.[93] This name could possibly be a retrospective mnemonic devise encoding the fall of the *Bacwezi* rather than the actual name of a drum.[94]

Plate 12. In the cattle lands of Rwanda Rwera, Nyabushozi, Mzee Israel Katuuka recited the lament for the dying cow

In the light of the overall picture emerging from the data collected for this book, it seems reasonable to propose that cows that survived the disaster at *Bigo* bred with a different type of cattle. K.K. Nganwa, in

his little book in Runyankore/Rukiga *Abakozire Eby'okutangaaza Omuri Ankole*, 'Some eminent people in Ankole' (1948/1972:23-24), presents one tradition about *Mutuumo Mwene Kinyoni*, whose cattle died from anthrax, the only one remaining as an "orphan", *akanyana k'akafuuzi*, was a white heifer, *Kajeru*. From that white cow the herds were rebuilt. Told in retrospect all traditions appear conflated. Nganwa's story seems to summarise the history of cross breeding, because the firstborn calves, *ejigaija*, were named *Kagaaju na Rugaaju*, 'a brown heifer and a brown bull-calf'.[95] The term **-gaaju*, has been identified for Rutara as a 'large head of cattle with long horn'. Although we have noted that the specific term *enyambo* for large long-horned cattle can be tied to a much later context, archaeological findings confirm the presence of the *engaaju* long-horned type before the desertion of the *Ntusi* grain cultivation centre some time in the 14th or 15th Centuries.[96]

There is one clan whose members up to this day have to bear the burden of the evil deeds of their ancestors, the *Basingo*.

The *Basingo* Curse

The hole in the ground reoccurs as a means of destruction in the tradition explaining how the *Basingo* clan was cursed. From the context of Bunyoro Fisher (1911/1970:99-100) recorded the earliest version describing this episode. The beginning of her rendition sets the scene:

> The two brothers, *Mulindwa* and *Mugenyi*, loved each other very much, and had all things in common; neither undertook any enterprise or journey without his brother.
>
> On a certain day the *Bacwezi* all went out to hunt together; they were dressed in royal apparel, each wore a barkcloth of the finest fibre and two leopard skins. On hearing a commotion in the courtyard, their wives peeped out of their houses, and concealing themselves behind the fence, they looked through the gaps that they might behold the grandeur of their lords as they departed. When *Mugenyi* started out, all the women remarked on his beauty and strength, but afterwards *Mulindwa* appeared, and they held their breath in admiration of him, and said among themselves, "*Mulindwa* has quite eclipsed *Mugenyi*; he excels all men." Now *Mugenyi*'s mother, *Nyangoro*, heard these words, and her heart was filled with anger and jealousy, and she determined to kill *Mulindwa*.

> [...] she planned for his destruction to be carried out under the disguise of love. She dug a very deep pit inside her house, filled it with boiling water, and covered it over with thin twigs and grass. (Fisher 1911/1970:99-100).

Mzee I. Katuuka said that *Mugenyi*'s "mother" came from the *Basingo* clan.[97] In Fisher's account "her" name is *Nyangoro*, but the name Nyakatura (1973:25) recorded makes more sense in relation to the symbolic context of kingship where "she" should be placed: *Nyangoma*, 'of the drum'. It is the *Musingo* "mother" 'of the drum', *Nyangoma*, who here personifies the making of the destructive pit designed to undo *Mulindwa*. In one version the Banyankore have "her" role collectively performed by "*Abasingo* daughters":

> During the reign of *Bacwezi* one king, *Murindwa*, particularly loved women. The *Abasingo* daughters felt they were tired of him so one day they planned to kill him. When they knew he would come they dug a big and deep hole in the middle of their hut. Then they covered its mouth with grass. They got a very beautiful skin mat, *ekyahi*, and put it on top of the grass. When *Murindwa* arrived they gave him a seat. This was the *ekyahi*. *Murindwa* stepped on it and fell in the hole with it. They had put a lot of spears at the bottom of the pit pointing upwards. So the spears pierced him and they immediately filled the hole and buried him there.
>
> Now, he had come with his dog and when the dog saw what had happened to its master, it ran back home. The people at home wondered why it was returning without its master. The dog whined several times and went out again so the people followed it. It led them to the hut of the *Abasingo* girls and the men searched and searched till they discovered the newly filled-in hole. They dug up *Murindwa* dead. From that time the *Abasingo* clan were also cursed, and even forbidden from seeing *Bagyendanwa*.[98]

Mzee I. Katuuka's Runyankore version tells us that *Murindwa* did not die but became a cripple.[99] According to Fisher's rendition *Mugenyi* rescues *Mulindwa* from the pit.

> [...] Led by the dogs' instincts, he approached the spot, and feeling an intense heat rising from the ground he tore away the covering and discovered his brother in the pit burnt and blistered beyond recognition. He lifted the body out of the boiling water, poured milk over him, and by degrees consciousness returned, although the fingers and toes were completely withered up. [...]

> Mugenyi forgave his mother, but her daughters and other members of the clan he seized, and many of them he killed, the others were cursed by Mulindwa [...] From that day princes have never married into the Basingo clan (Fisher 1911/1970:101).

"His" body treated with life-giving milk, *Mulindwa* survived to declare the *Basingo* clan cursed. Origin traditions about the *Basingo* curse may encapsulate the history about *Bigo*. Connecting *Bigo* with *Mugenyi*, the *Musingo* elder explained:

> *Bigo bya Mugenyi* was named after *Mugenyi*, *Wamara*'s son who loved cattle very much. He is in fact referred to as a cattle-maniac. They say it is a very beautiful place, very good for cattle and that if one goes there and speaks against cattle, one would never find one's way out of there.[100]

So both *Wamara* (Ihangiro tradition) and *Mugenyi* "loved cattle very much". In this context "love" is apparently a euphemism for "greed".[101] Out of fear for ancestral revenge the *Babiito/Bahinda* would have to talk well about a perceived "dynasty" whose blessing they depended on. The name *Nyangoma*, 'of the drum', linked to the *Basingo* clan identifies "her son" *Mugenyi* as a *Bacwezi* king.[102] Significantly, Cory and Hartnoll (1945:V:24) annotate the full title *Wamara Rusingo* given to the clan spirit of no other clan than the *Basingo* in Karagwe. In the wider Rutara-speaking people's context the intrinsic meaning of the name *Wamara Rusingo* for the *Basingo* clan spirit most probably indicates that *Wamara Rusingo* personifies the *Musingo*[103] ancestor, who brought down a perceived "dynasty" at *Bigo* because of excessive greed for cattle. That "dynasty" was retrospectively understood as *Bacwezi at the same time kings and spirits.*

The Role of the *Basiita*

Mulindwa/*Murindwa*'s "mother" belonged to the *Basiita* clan (Buchanan 1974:131). If the *Basiita* served the people (Ihangiro tradition) *Mulindwa* cursed the *Basingo* with popular support. The name *Mulindwa* is derived from the verb *ku-rinda*, 'look after, watch, keep' (Taylor 1959:70). The meaning of the name *Mulindwa*, when translated, encapsulates the perception that the *Basiita* were keepers or

protectors[104] of alleged *Bacwezi* drums before the arrival of the *Babiito/Bahinda*. From the perspective of the Banyoro court historians, who made themselves the mouthpiece of *Bacwezi* history, it is said that before the *Bacwezi* disappeared "they" left the kingship drums in the hands of the *Basiita* (Nyakatura 1973:55). Another perspective emerges here. The name *Basiita* is derived from the Runyankore verb *ku-siita*, 'to crush' (Taylor 1959:75), an interpretation suggesting that the *Basiita* warriors overthrew the "dynasty" that came to be called *Bacwezi*.[105] The conclusion is that the *Basiita* may have led the people to throw out those who had brought destruction to the region.

The Standard Regional *Bacwezi* Genealogy

Wamara is the personification of the end of a perceived *Bacwezi* "dynasty". However, *Babiito* ideologists of state-craft would recreate a reverse picture of a *Bacwezi* dynastic genealogy of two kings and a regent, to whom they consider themselves as direct heirs. Instead of attributing *Wamara* "his" reconstructed historical role as the persona who lost cattle and kingship, the *Babiito* record *Wamara* as "the last *Mucwezi* king", conflating "his" role as king and spirit. This version has become the "orthodox" version (Buchanan 1979:88), which I take as the official version.

> The standard regional *Bacwezi* dynastic genealogy:
> *Ndahura*, the first *Mucwezi Omukama* and expansionist
> *Mulindwa*, the caretaker or protector
> *Wamara*, son of *Ndahura* and the last *Mucwezi Omukama*

If *Mulindwa* (the *Musiita*) threw out the "dynasty", whose fall *Wamara* (the *Musingo*) personifies, then in reality *Wamara* should come first. To the *Babiito*, however, *Ndahura* is "the first *Mucwezi*".

"The Little Planting-spear", Isimbwa: the Process of Social Change

The catastrophe encapsulated in the *Miringoigana* account explains the beginning of the end. The *Kahuuga* cow's survival demonstrates that not all the cattle at *Bigo* died. Traditions referring to the *Bacwezi* make it clear that after all the bad omens they still did not want to depart. The

breeding of the original cattle with new cattle suggests that indeed the *Bacwezi* attempted to rebuild their herds. The traditions surrounding the character *Isimbwa* demonstrate how they did this.

According to Kinyoro court traditions, the persona *Isimbwa* springs from the union of the last king of the *Batembuzi* [*Bagabu*] "dynasty" in Bunyoro, *Isaza*, and *Nyamata*, 'of milk' hailing from "the Underworld". Characterised as a "peripatetic voluptuary" (Oliver 1953:134) Kinyoro official versions Buchanan (1974:131) quoted from Bikunya (1927:16-21) and Nyakatura (1947:3-4) make *Isimbwa* progenitor of a *Bacwezi* genealogy. Ascending from the Underworld, *Isimbwa* appears as the *Bacwezi* ancestor, who grants legitimacy to the *Babiito* dynasty. In the wider scope of clan traditions, however, Buchanan regarded the *Isimbwa* tradition as "key to the transition from the *Batembuzi* to the *Bacwezi* period" (1974:130) reflecting the emergence of "a *Bahima*-type pastoral aristocracy" (1979:106). So according to Buchanan's reconstruction this development took place in "the *Bacwezi* period", a period in time she estimates from around 1200 to perhaps 1350 or 1400, when the *Bacwezi* "dynasty" were believed to have ruled.[106] Buchanan (1979:103) observed:

> The story of intermarriage is used so consistently in court tradition as a device bridging dynastic change that its presence ... signals the historian to view the Isimbwa tradition, which is intervowen with the traditions of the emergence of prestige clans with Sanga cattle,[107] as a period distinct from that of Isimbwa's 'sons', the Bacwezi.

The renditions above worked out from the translation of names provide a different perspective on *Isimbwa*. *Isimbwa* does not represent a mere "device bridging dynastic change" but rather the very mechanism that the people who came to be called *Bacwezi* used to rebuild their herds.[108] The translation of *Isimbwa* clarifies "his" role. The root of the name *Isimbwa* is not Runyankore[109] but occurs in Bona-Baisi's (1960:171) Luhaya dictionary.[110] *I-simb-wa* is derived from *kusimba*, which means *kubyara engemu*, 'to plant a banana' or *kuchumita omwitaka*, 'to "spear" or stag into the soil'. For Kinyoro Davis (1938/1952:162) has *-simba*, 'plant, stick upright in the soil'. So the intrinsic meaning of the name *Isimbwa* could be "the little planting spear", used as a Kinyoro device

to describe the mechanism of intermarriage. One synonym or rather idiomatic expression given for the same root, *kutaiya bilenge* (Bona-Baisi 1960:171) is translated "bring inside something from outside".[111] *I-simb-wa* may encapsulate the historical process whereby outsiders were brought inside because they could provide fresh blood to dying herds. Daughters of important clans would have been offered in exchange for cattle.

Therefore, *Isimbwa*, "the little planting spear", symbolises the very process of intermarriage, a process of social change that must have followed the catastrophe at *Bigo* that gradually caused the end of a "dynasty" retrospectively called *Bacwezi*. So the persona *Isimbwa*, "a hunter and aspiring pastoralist", to whom Buchanan links resident clans, in reality personifies the transition *not to, but from* Buchanan's (1979:106) "*Bacwezi* period". The vehicle of change is intermarriage because traditions of these clans relate that their women were given in marriage to *Isimbwa*, whose offspring would retroactively be given the appellation *Bacwezi*. Nine of the names in Buchanan's genealogy are designations for guardian spirits venerated by the clans of "their mothers".

Sutton states that the economy of the ancient polity that in the remote past controlled *Ntusi* and *Bigo* appears to have depended on mixed agri-pastoralism (1998:43), the socio-economic context mirrored in the Ihangiro tradition. A change in sustenance pattern can be discernible from around 1400, a century before the final abandonment of *Bigo*.

> What is very clear is that quite profound change occurred around the time when those places were deserted. In fact, it appears that the abandonment of Bigo and the desertion of the Ntusi settlement were inseparable from the break-up of the system established over the previous five hundred years (Sutton 1998:70).

In this study *Isimbwa* marks a specific process of social change *retrospectively* codified by the *Babiito*. Available evidence investigated has shown that cattle kept enclosed are likely to have died from cattle disease. It is suggested that the *Bacwezi* need to rebuild dying herds

triggered off *Isimbwa*, a persona symbolising the way the "other herders" merged with prior people. The date 1400, which Sutton postulates for the onset of a period of change characterised by a process of separate development of pastoral and agricultural economies, would corroborate this scenario.

Environmental constraints of drought must have contributed to the social and economic crises that affected Rutara-speaking populations at this time in history. Analyses of Nile water levels as recorded by the Rodah Nilometer near Cairo have supported approximate dates for drought traditions in the interlacustrine region (Webster, ed. 1979). If the process of social change started ca. 100 years before the final abandonment of *Bigo* ca. 1500, then *Wamara*'s famine c. 1382-1409 (Webster 1979a:6) would fit into the picture.[112] The *Wamara* reference for this particular famine seems to coincide in history with the appearance of the king *Wamara*, whom the *Bahinda* in Ihangiro tell us about. "He" lost cattle and kingship, symbolised by the white cow, *Kitare*, synonymous with the kingship drum. Following the logic inherent to the interlacustrine belief system, it appears that only in traditions explaining how *Wamara* became a *Bacwezi* spirit, "he" can be deciphered as the symbol of a human king who lost cattle and kingship in the remote past.[113]

Instead of *Isimbwa* the *Bahima* in the former kingdom of Nkore use the diviner *Kakara ka Shagama*, "to stay on for a little while by the help of the first blood of the woman", to achieve legitimacy for the *Bahinda*.[114] In the final analysis the necessary *Bahinda* legitimacy hinges on the *Abayangwe/Abayango* clan, the blood of whose daughter *Njunaki* gives the right to rule to the *Bahinda* dynasty.[115] The right to rule is embodied in the sacred kingship drum in Karagwe perceived as *Omuyango* incarnate.

The *Babiito* dynastic ideologists of statecraft engineered another category of traditions to justify and formalise the social structure that arose as an outcome of *Isimbwa*. The latter traditions must have sprung from within the contextual framework of *Babiito* expansions.

Social Stratification

Interlacustrine kingship ideology centred on the symbol of the cow before the *Babiito* institutionalised social stratification based on the ownership of cattle. Creation traditions on the Milk Test theme that are told among peoples of both Rutara and West Highland speech communities testify to the impact of the Bunyoro centre of creation and justify social stratification in a number of interlacustrine kingdoms.

Milk Test Traditions from Rutara and West Highlands Speech Communities

Traditions of dynastic origin validate a divinely ordained socio-political structure. In every case the crucial factor for attaining status and recognition in society is the outcome of the Milk Test to which either the Creator or the first man on earth subjected his three sons. The literature abounds with traditions that justify the social system in Bunyoro, Nkore, Kiziba, Rwanda and Bushuubi. Those from Bunyoro form a basis for the following discussion.

John Beattie (1971:34-39), a social anthropologist, described and evaluated the sources for "Nyoro myths of origin", legends that attracted his interest mainly because they provide a "mythical charter, in Malinowski's phrase," to justify Bunyoro's system of social and political stratification. In Fisher's and Bikunya's version *Ruhanga* created the world and together with his brother *Nkya* he provided everything essential for man's needs on earth. Nyakatura recorded another version stating that in the beginning the world consisted of wasteland, inhabited by animals, ruled by *Kalisa*, the lord of wild animals. People with cattle arrived from the north ruled by a king called *Kintu* with his wife *Kati*, which are names derived from Bantu roots meaning man and woman. Their three sons were *Kairu*, *Kahuma* and *Kakama*. One day *Kintu* decided to test his sons in order to find out who would be the heir. In the evening he filled three bowls with milk and gave them one each, telling them to keep the bowls on their lap full until morning. *Kakama* spilt a little, wept and asked his brothers to fill up his bowl from theirs,

which they did. At cockcrow *Kairu* spilt nearly all his milk and then he shared what was left between his brothers. *Kahuma* fell asleep and spilt a lot of his milk. When *Kintu* came in the morning he found the youngest boy *Kakama*'s pot full, the second boy *Kahuma*'s nearly full and *Kairu*'s, the eldest one, quite empty. From then on their roles in society were predestined. *Kairu* who had spilt all his milk was to become a peasant and a servant to his brothers. *Kahuma* who had kept some milk in the pot would be the one to look after the cattle. The youngest boy *Kakama* was to become the ruler because his brothers had consented to give him their milk, they should also consent to be governed by him. After some time *Kintu* disappeared in "the Underworld", *Okuzimu* (Nyakatura 1973:2-4).

The story told in the old kingdom of Nkore follows this pattern. In the beginning Nkore was uninhabited. *Ruhanga*, the Creator, came down from heaven to rule. To discover who among his three sons, *Kairu*, *Kahima* or *Kakama*, would succeed him to the throne *Ruhanga* set them a test. The outcome was the same as in Bunyoro. *Kairu* should be the servant of his brothers for his milk pot was empty, *Kahima* should be the herdsman of *Kakama*, to whom he had given his milk and *Kakama* should be the heir and ruler of the land. Then *Ruhanga* returned to heaven from whence he had come (Katate-Kamugungunu 1955).[116]

From Kiziba a version collected by the White Fathers[117] relates that *Rugaba* lived in the Underworld, *Okuzimu*, where he begot two sons, *Nyamuhanga*, the Creator, and *Kibumbi*, the potter. As adults they created human beings: *Kibumbi* collected clay and made two blocks that he exhibited in the courtyard. His elder brother, *Nyamuhanga*, came and removed them and created two human beings from them, the man *Kintu* and the woman *Kikazi*. *Nyamuhanga* sent *Kintu* and *Kikazi* to the world above, where they gave birth to three sons: *Rufire*, 'Death', *Magara*, 'Life', and *Kikama*. Tests administered by their father *Kintu* determined their respective status in society. The eldest son *Rufire* became the ancestor of the agricultural *Bairu*, *Magara* became the ancestor of the noble clans, *Bahima*, would be kin to the rulers, while *Kikama*, the youngest one, became the ancestor of the ruling clan, the clan of the kings, *Abakama*. So the youngest brother was in

every above-mentioned case the brother who had managed to keep his milk pot full until morning, because the others had consented to give him milk from theirs. He became the heir with the title *Omukama*, literally 'the Milker'. Cows were regarded as the most valuable assets and the first duty of the king was to give his people milk, to be their Milker, *Omukama*.[118]

This comparison of the versions from Bunyoro, Nkore and Kiziba reveals that the scenario of world creation is staged only from Bunyoro.[119] Bunyoro, in dynastic as well as clan traditions told among Rutara-speaking peoples, was perceived as a centre and an area of creation. The various Milk Test traditions linked to creation are definitely shaped after the same pattern. In a similar way as every new clan migration and settlement could be interpreted in spiritual terms as a new creation, the foundation of states and stratified society had to be given ancestral blessing and justification by being connected to creation. At the historic level the *Babiito* dynasty from their Bunyoro centre controlled this development. But of all the Milk Test traditions recapitulated here only the Kihaya version from Kiziba has a circumstantial prelude before *Kintu* and *Kikazi* are said to have given birth to their three sons, *Rufire*, 'Death', *Magara*, 'Life', and *Kikama*. According to his Kiziba version Ishumi (1971:715) explained that the eldest son *Rufire* was the *Kairu* of Bunyoro, *Magara* was *Kahima* or *Kahuma*, while the youngest one, *Kikama*, was known as *Kakama*. Importantly, the names reflecting social categories are here expressed in existential concepts of literally 'death' and 'life'. As has been demonstrated for the context of Ihangiro, the status of the *Bahima* aristocracy in Kiziba is also determined by the power control of metallurgy and iron working skills. Therefore the specific Kiziba version of the Milk Test would not identify the first *Muhima* aristocrat by the name of *Kahima*, alluding to migrant pastoralism. *Magara*, a name that ultimately derives from the Bantu verbal root *-kara*, 'to stay, live in a place',[120] would better reflect local socio-economic power structures prevailing in the mentioned Bahaya kingdoms south of the Kagera River.

Origin traditions on the Milk Test theme recorded among speakers of Kinyarwanda and Kishuubi of the West Highlands branch of the Great Lakes Bantu are also orchestrated from the Bunyoro centre. The first king in Rwanda is said to be *Kigwa*, who descended from Heaven (from *kugwa*, 'to fall'). As will be further demonstrated, relevant sources that have been consulted confirm the pattern that "Heaven" is a symbolic reference to the Bunyoro "centre of creation". King *Kigwa* is said to have begotten three sons, *Gatwa*, *Gahutu* and *Gatutsi*. The Milk Test that king *Kigwa* administered made *Gatwa* an outcast, because he had drunk all the milk in the pot during the night and showed himself completely unreliable. *Gahutu* had fallen asleep and spilt his milk, while it was only *Gatutsi* who had stayed up through the night to keep guard over his milk. So *Gatutsi* was deemed a worthy successor, forever released from menial tasks, which were to be done by *Gahutu* (Lemarchand 1970:33). The Bashuubi, who are closely related to the Barundi, recount a similar version in which the Creator, *Imana*, administers the Milk Test to the three sons he had created, *Tusi*, *Hutu* and *Twa*. Before the test, they had all lived in the same way; there had been no master, no servant. Afterwards *Twa* was never to have any milk, but he had to go and make the pots for it. *Hutu*, who had spilt most of his milk, had to get milk from his *Tusi* master in return for serving him, cultivating his fields and carrying his loads. *Tusi* had spilt half of the milk, because he had nearly thrown the whole calabash on a snake that entered the house in the night. So *Imana* warned him that he might loose half his herds, the appearance of a snake symbolising cattle epidemics.[121]

In addition to the differences in names the traditions from Bunyoro, Ankore and Kiziba deviate from the ones told in Rwanda and Bushuubi[122] on a crucial point. Among Rutara-speakers the youngest one of the three sons is always ordained to rule over his two brothers,[123] the eldest of whom is predestined to be the agriculturalist and the middle son to become the noble herder, close to the king. The agriculturalist has to serve both the king and the herdsman, and

the king's close relationship with the herdsman is shown by his title: *Omukama*, 'the Milker'. In Rwanda and Bushuubi traditions, on the other hand, there is no mention of the ruler. The three boys represent the three different groups in society: the pastoralist *Batutsi/Batusi*, the agriculturalist *Bahutu* and the *Batwa* potters. This presentation, valid by 1900, mirrors local politico-demographic circumstances enhancing the rifts between the socio-economic groups on the local level in society. It sets Rwanda (and Burundi) apart from nearly all other African political regimes testifying to a uniquely rigid political centralisation (Vansina 2004:29).

Judging from the evidence at hand the royal title *Omukama*, literally 'the milker', which occurs in kingdoms of the Rutara sub-branch of Great Lakes Bantu successor languages has to have been coined comparatively recently (contra Schoenbrun 1998:194). The Milk Test traditions of Rwanda and Bushuubi neither mention the ruler nor has the title of the king, *Mwami*, anything to do with cattle keeping. *Mwami*, an elaboration of a term for 'chief', dates back to the era of Great Lakes Bantu speech (Schoenbrun 1990: Table 4.35). Mzee D. Ssemuguruka from Ngara explained that *Umwami* means 'something that emerged out of others and became great and special'.[124] Kingship was already of great antiquity as exemplified by the appellation *Umwami*, when *Babiito* incursions would have introduced the concept of the Milk Test to these southern kingdoms. Relevant source material from the ground in Rwanda consulted by Vansina (2004:75) complements the picture: "The first systematic differentiation between Tutsi and Hutu evolved" precisely in a military context.

Milk Test traditions of five interlacustrine states reveal differences between the traditions recorded in the kingdoms of Rutara- and those of West Highland- speakers. Reflections of the historical context in each kingdom, they mirror political adjustments administered from what I have called the Bunyoro "centre of creation". In other words, the Milk Test traditions are eloquent proof of *Babiito* ideology of state-craft. The court tradition *Omukama* E. Rukamba of Kyamutwara related points to Bunyoro as the centre of

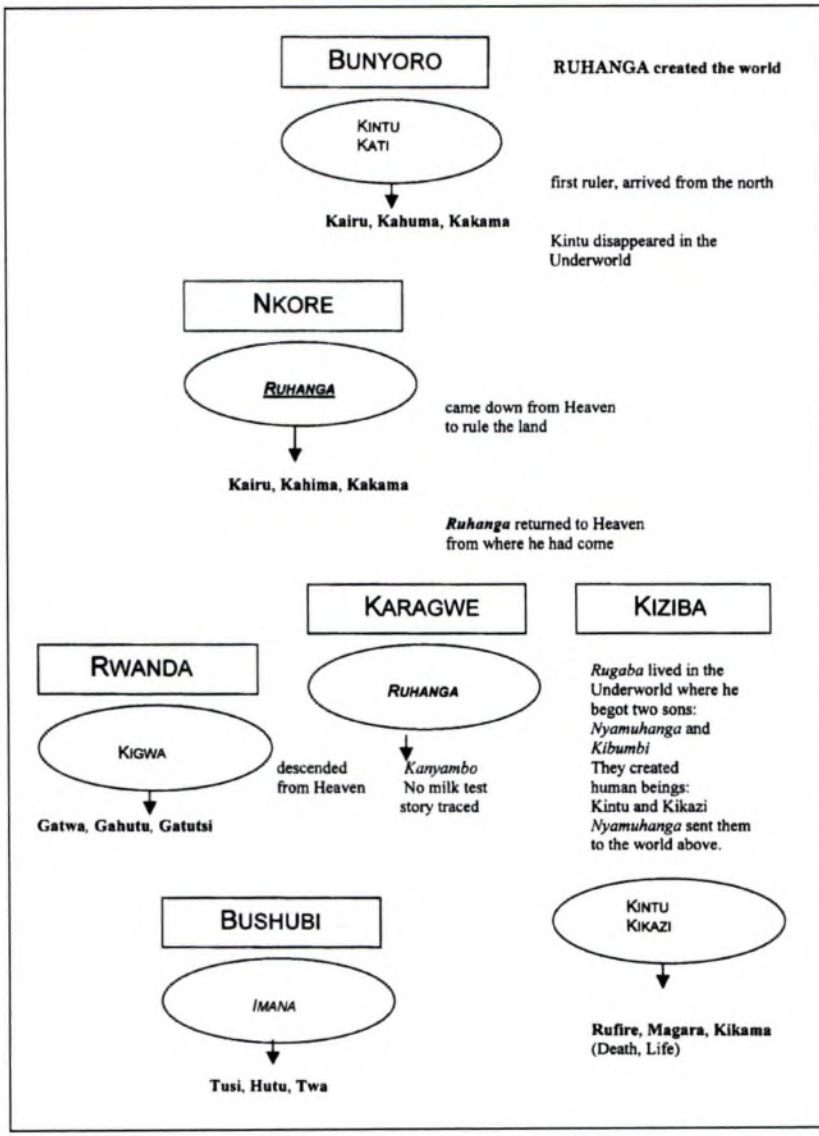

Figure 4. Milk Test Traditions, MTT.

power. *Igaba* in Bunyoro was said to have sent his sons to rule other countries, *Bagyendanwa* to Nkore, *Nyabatama* to Karagwe and *Kachwankizi* to Kiziba, each name being that of a royal drum and symbol of kingship. Karagwe kingship may be linked to Bunyoro by the royal drum *Nyabatama* in ancestral traditions told in Kyamutwara, but there is no trace of a Milk Test tradition in Karagwe itself.

Origin traditions told in Karagwe connect *Kanyambo* to the Creator, *Ruhanga*. *Kanyambo* is one of *Ruhanga*'s sons, sent to settle in the country and occupy it. Since *Kanyambo* represents cattle keepers of the recently introduced long-horned cattle, *enyambo*, following the Kinyoro Milk Test schema he should be the counterpart of *Kahima* of the Banyankore. The lack of a Milk Test tradition suggests that Karagwe held a more independent position in relation to the Bunyoro centre than was the case for the other kingdoms under investigation. Moreover, the existence of a particular ritual relationship between the kings of Bunyoro and of Karagwe at the occasion of succession argues in favour of Karagwe's special status vis-à-vis Bunyoro. One of the elders in Bunyoro had been sent as the king's messenger to Karagwe twice, each time bringing a white sheep, explained as a sign that Karagwe kingship of the *Bahinda* originated in Bunyoro. According to Kinyoro traditions, long ago the sons of King *Mpinduki*, 'rebel', broke away from Bunyoro and went to Karagwe where one of them was accepted as king. He was called *Ruhinda Rwampinduki*, in Bunyoro said to have been a Munyoro and "the first king" of Karagwe.[125]

The Milk Test traditions examined here provided ideological support for the socio-economic order of the *buhake* client/master relationship, a system of divergent formation. The Milk Test story that is told in for example Rwanda differs from the Nkore version. The difference is the key to an understanding of the variations that can be observed as regards the implementation of the client-ship system.

The *Buhake* Client/Master Relationship

In Karagwe some of the *Bahima* herders were specifically connected to the ruling *Bahinda* families in a client/master relationship. In addition to their own cattle they were responsible for the cattle of the *Bahinda*. The client-ship system in Karagwe involved only the *Bahima* herders and

the *Bahinda* ruling clan (Katoke 1975:4). According to Ford and Hall (1947:3) the king was "absolute ruler of all his subjects". The pastoralist *Bahima* did not have any power over the agriculturalists; that is they did not control the majority population, hence no need for any Milk Test tradition. So the written sources consulted affirm that the social structure in Karagwe differed from that in Rwanda. On the eve of the colonial era almost every *Muhutu* had to serve under a *Mututsi* within the *buhake* clientship system (Maquet 1961:150). In Karagwe, on the other hand, the *Bahima* served the king as herdsmen and as warriors while the majority population, the *Bairu* farmers, provided tribute in produce and labour and also as fighters. No *Mwiru* was a client of a *Muhima* (Ford and Hall 1947:3), demonstrating that in Karagwe the *buhake* client-ship system was not carried through to include the *Bairu* in relation to the *Bahima*. Environment and demography could account for the difference. The sparsely populated country allowed the two groups space to remain in separate ecological niches (cf. Katoke 1969:25).[126]

The Banyankore have been described in much the same words. Doornbos (1975:27) stressed that there had been a failure to recognise the basic fact that "[...] the major part of the *Bairu* definitely lived a fairly autonomous existence".[127] Karugire's thoroughly researched study on the kingdom of Nkore emphasised that it was the king himself who alone had power over all his subjects just as in the Karagwe context.[128] The king could confiscate anyone's cattle for any reason whatever and give cattle to whomever he chose, either as a mark of special favour or as a reward for some service. The Milk Test traditions told among Rutara-speaking peoples, including the Banyankore, reflect divine justification for the king to do so. We have seen how these traditions show that the representatives of the agriculturalists and the herders had agreed to serve their ruler. They had all agreed to give him some milk from their pots, but by nature of their predestined task, the herder was close to the ruler. Therefore, Karugire should have been more explicit about the fact that, at the time when the colonialists entered the scene,

the king would have chosen to give cattle to the *Bahima*, not to the *Bairu* (cf. Mushanga 1994:14).

On the other hand, Milk Test traditions from West Highlands' speech communities do not include the ruler among the three brothers, who represented the subjects only. In the case of Rwanda *Gatwa* disqualified himself, while *Gahutu*'s destiny was to serve *Gatutsi* in the *buhake* client/master relationship. Maquet (1961:91-92) clarified the power mechanisms pertaining to rights over cattle that prevailed by the end of the 19th century. Vansina (2004:47) describes the binding, hereditary terms of the *ubuhake* contract:

> The patron (*shebuja*) gives one or more head of cattle in usufruct to the client (*umugaragu*) but maintains the ultimate ownership of these cattle. He assures his client of his protection. In return the client must help his patron whenever needed and becomes his servant or *umuhakwa*. The relation was hereditary and only the patron could dissolve it by requiring not only that the client return the patron's cattle but that he also turn over all his own cattle as well.

So the socio-economic conditions that prevailed in Rwanda appear to exhibit relentlessly unequal stipulations formalised in the *ubuhake* contract. Environmental factors could be crucial to developments here. Rwanda lies in the well-watered highland area along the Western Rift that sustains some of the densest populations in Africa.[129] According to Vansina (2004:28), from the 17th Century onwards, competition for resources is likely to be related to the more rigid organisation of relationships there than in Ankore and Karagwe.

The rolling savannahs of Karagwe and Ankore allowed the pastoralists to move with their herds, while the farmers had enough space to cultivate their fields. Naturally the two groups exchanged products (Katoke 1969:74). Karugire (1971:50) even held the view that "the class system in Nkore was an open one". One of Karugire's (1971:51) informants from among the ordinary people told him that "he who was poor was a *Mwiru*; he who was rich was a *Muhima*". Cattle were the standard measurement of wealth and prestige. But it must be

stressed that it was only in exceptional cases that a *Mwiru* could acquire the cows that would enable him to become a *Muhima*.[130]

The *Nyamuhima* Tradition

A pastoralist ran great risks of loosing his herds to the hazards of drought and cattle disease ending up in *buhake* client/master relationship. The *Nyamuhima omugani* told in Karagwe can illustrate the socio-economic and cultural reality of the *Bahima* in a period that reflects a situation prevailing towards the end of the 19th Century, when rinderpest had decimated 95 % of Karagwe's cattle (Ford and Hall 1947:21, cf. Kjekshus 1977). When I first heard this story I got the impression that its message concerns the value of cattle, at the same time it contains a warning not to listen to gossip. In the final analysis, however, it goes much deeper than that: it strikes the very essence of *buhake*. The little bird, *akashemuyonza*, communicates nothing less than divine justification for the institution of *buhake*, the "premise of inequality" (Maquet 1961) based on the ownership of cattle. That the *akashemuyonza* represents the voice of the diviner can be inferred from the fact that clans in charge of important ritual offices in Karagwe as well as Bunyoro respect a "small bird" totem.[131] Ta Matayo Rwemburara, himself of the *Bahutu* clan respecting the same totem, told the story about the man *Nyamuhima*, personification of the *Bahima*:

> *Nyamuhima atungir'enteze igana*, '*Nyamuhima* owned his herd of one hundred cows'. Misfortune befell and the cows were struck by cattle disease, *omulyamu*. All the cows died except for one, which gave birth to a she-calf. It appeared that she was pregnant. At the stage of giving birth, a bird, *akashemuyonza*, came and stood at the cattle enclosure, *rugo*. It said:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | "*Iwe Muhima, tunga etali egyo, tung'igana,* | 'You who call yourself a *Muhima*, don't own that cow only, |
> | *Tunga Kitare, tunga igana* "//x3. | Own a white cow, *Kitare*, own a hundred cows, *igana*.'//x3. |
>
> At daybreak the bird came back and sang the same song. *Nyamuhima* said to himself, "Let me kill that wretched cow so that I may get a hundred cows instead." He went and fetched his iron bar and hit the cow at the neck. The calf came out and he slaughtered it on the spot. The next morning he stretched the hide.

> When the bird came back and saw the stretched hide it said,
> "You slaughtered your one and only cow, you slaughtered your one and only cow, yee, yehee, yeheee! You did it for nothing, shame on you. You did it for nothing, shame on you. Come and see the man who has made a fool of himself".
> His wife said, "Didn't I tell you, my husband, to own one cow and then slaughter it, isn't that shameful!"
> The man did not care. He prepared the meat, ate most of it and the last piece he packed up for the journey, *entanda*. He had nothing to do but to leave his home and go and serve, *kuhakwa*, somewhere else.[132]

Nyamuhima had been a rich man, because "he" had owned 'a herd of one hundred cows', *ente igana*, literally 'a hundred'.[133] When a *Muhima* lost his cows it meant that he had lost his independence and had to go and serve, *kuhakwa*, under another *Muhima* or a *Muhinda* in the *buhake* client-ship system.

In a contradictory way the tale illustrates the grim reality behind the very concept of *buhake*. Vansina (2004:47) has it that in Kinyarwanda the noun *ubuhake* derives from *ku-hâka*, 'to be with young, to be ready to calf'; *umuhakwa*, "the one who serves" is then like a 'calf in its mother's womb'. When *Nyamuhima* realised that "he" had lost all "his" herds symbolised by *Kitare*, "he" knew that "he" had lost status and prestige in society. Apparently the voice of the ancestors, materialised by the little bird, made "him" act like a fool. It cheated "him" to slaughter "his" one and only cow that even carried a calf in its womb, *-hâka*. But it appears that *Nyamuhima* was only faithful to "his" destiny. The act of slaughtering the last cow, the cow with calf symbolising the subservient status of a client, made "him" self- destruct. In a similar manner *Kintu* made *Wamara* commit suicide when "he" had lost *Kitare*. So in accordance with the predestined role of servitude, which said that "he" could only eat meat from dead cows *Nyamuhima* killed the cow, ate it and packed up the rest for the road. From then on "he" carried the burden of servitude, a burden that, however, tied up the patron to protect "him", the *omuhakwa*. For Rwanda Vansina (2004:47) summarises the unequal conditions of *umuhakwa*, mirrored in the *Nyamuhima* tradition told in Karagwe:

> The term is obviously a herding metaphor: the *umuhakwa* depends as much on the giver and receives as much protection from him as if he was a calf in the womb of its mother. The word also suggests the image of a being, the patron, who holds others, the clients, inside himself. The relation therefore essentially traded political submission for military protection.

Proposed *Bahima* and *Bahuma* Origins

One of the last drum-keepers of the Karagwe kingdom and councillor of King Rumanyika II stated that the *Bahima* were the favourites of the king and owners of the white cow, *abatungi b'ente Kitare*.[134] This statement can be interpreted to mean that the *Bahima* brought kingship to the *Bahinda*.[135] The secret of *Bahinda* legitimacy needs to be treated extensively in another work. Here we will discuss the etymology of the name *Bahima*. We are told by a distinguished elder and ritual specialist that the *Bahima* are the owners of the white cow/the kingship drum. The same drum is perceived as the *Omuyango* incarnate. Now the following question arises: who were the *Bahima* originally?

The symbolic significance of the white *Kitare* cow of the *Bahima* does not attest to any context of specialised pastoralism, but rather to socio-economic power structures combining the power of iron-working with wealth in cattle. Closely related to the *Bahinda*, the *Bayango* in Karagwe are regarded as *Bahima* aristocrats (Katoke 1975:38), which is not the case for the Banyankore, who regard them as *Bairu* agriculturalists. Perhaps, in the final analysis, the all-important *Bayango* (Karagwe, Buhaya)/ *Bayangwe* (Ankole)/*Banyange*[136] (Burundi) clan of the Monkey totem gave rise to the name *Bahima*, possibly derived from the word for 'monkey', *enkíma* (Taylor 1959:174). The monopolisation of the *Bahima* designation for "noble herders" exclusively could have been a political adjustment engineered by the *Babiito*. The evidence presented in this section suggests that the pastoralists were not formally acknowledged as *Bahima* patrons until after the *Babiito* ideologists had established the system of social stratification that the Milk Test traditions codifies.

If this conclusion is correct, the *buhake* master/client relationship may have been an institution engineered by the *Babiito*. The

term occurs both in Rutara and among West Highland-speakers. Schoenbrun (1997:128, root 187) has **-haka* as a West Highlands areal terminology, which means that it would have spread from there to Rutara-speakers. But if the *Babiito* originated the Milk Test traditions, then *obuhake/ubuhake* would be spread by the Rutara. It is possible that the *Banyinginya* dynasty, who perceived themselves as *Bahima*,[137] contributed to the formalisation of the *ubuhake* system in Rwanda.

A problem that remains to be addressed is the etymology of the name *Bahuma*, in Webster's view a designation for "northern pastoralists" (Buchanan 1979:104). One clue for a possible answer to the question of *-huma* provenience lies in the incidence of a cattle term, *-huma*, 'cow, cattle in general' found in Johnston's (1922:276) Subgroup A5, Cluster 6 for Lumasaba and Lukonde of North-West Elgon along the Kenya Rift Valley.[138] If cattle were introduced from the Kenya Rift Valley as suggested by the Lumasaba and Lukonde word *-huma*, the *Babiito*, who were known as "foreigners" in Bunyoro, could have migrated with cattle people bringing cattle they called *-huma*. Hence those people were named *Bahuma* not only in Bunyoro and Tooro, but according to my sources also in Ihangiro.[139] P.T. Robertshaw and D. Taylor (2000:19) observed that "it is probable that the rise of the class distinction between noble cattle-keepers and peasant agriculturalists ... occurred in the eighteenth century". But it is reasonable to suggest that the formalisation of the system evidenced by the Milk Test traditions was a process finalised by the *Babiito*, who built it on pre-existing socio-economic structures. This proposition can be substantiated by symbolic evidence extracted from the study of cattle terminology.

implication of Banyambo identification with *Bahima*, perceived as a noble class distinguished by the ownership of cattle, the name *Baragwe* would better serve its purpose of uniting the *ihanga* of Karagwe. The *Baragwe* honoured the *Ki-tare* cow, the root of whose name has been identified as a Southern Cushitic loan-word.

The Etymology of the Name of the White Cow, *Kitare*

Any straightforward Southern Cushitic etymology of the name of the cow is debatable not only on phonological grounds. Importantly, Ehret (1998:173-174) notes with interest that "the reconstructed vocabulary of cattle and other livestock breeding gives no indication that" early Southern Cushites would have "attributed any aesthetic or special social valuation to cattle".

Schoenbrun (1993b:48) has **-tárè* as an areal term for 'light coloured cattle' innovated as late as between AD 1000 and 1200. Basing his argument on the similarity of the colours, he primarily associates this root with "the ancient Southern Cushitic loan **taale-*, 'lioness' and the use of that word as a royal title in Nkore and Burundi". The royal title *Ntare* reoccurs in Karagwe genealogies (Katoke 1975:139). He also suggests a link between **-tárè* and **-tádè*, 'iron ore'[24], which may reflect "new associations of wealth with cattle in addition to the more long-standing ritually and economically important roles of iron." I have demonstrated that interlacustrine kingship, from ancient times, has been associated with power control of the technology of iron-working. Consequently, I contend that Schoenbrun's second proposition is worth serious consideration. In Karagwe iron was smelted from a special kind of stone locally known as *obutare*, 'iron ore'.[25]

The name of the white cow, *kitare*, could be symbolically associated with iron-working. The lion, *entare*, possibly symbolising the power of the craft. Bantu-speaking peoples are known to regard the knowledge of smelting and forging iron as secret and sacred.[26] It could be argued

that proto-Great Lakes Bantu-speakers borrowed the Southern Cushitic **taal-*, 'lioness', which they adopted as their word for 'lion', *en-tare/en-tale*. They could have changed the sound into a short vowel in analogy with their own word for "stone" or "iron-ore" (Johnston 1922:331). The *kitare* cow and the lion, *entare*, are closely connected in Karagwe kingship ritual customs and beliefs that predate social stratification based on the ownership of cattle. It has been demonstrated that the spirits of the Karagwe kings are believed to be transformed into the shape of lions. Moreover, there is no other *Bahinda* royal clan than the one in Karagwe that respects the lion as protective, secondary totem.

An investigation of New Moon rituals will now expose the *kitare/entare* pattern in association with the sacred kingship drum, *Nyabatama*, believed to harbour the *Muyango* spirit. When the king together with his ritual wife, *Mukangoma*, and sister, *Kinyanyengoma*, entered the shrine *Kagondo* in order to approach the sacred kingship drum, *kugya aha ngoma*, he had to abstain from sexual contacts during the night before, a rule that applied not only to all the ritual experts (Katoke 1975:166) but also to smiths engaged in smelting (Reid and MacLean 1995:149). It is said that the lions would refuse to permit those considered unclean from approaching the drum *Nyabatama*. Before entering *Kagondo* the king had to don the ritual garb, *enyambarwa*, lion skin[27] and the *ekisingo* crown made of the mane of a lion, *byoya by'esimba*, decorated with cowrie shells.[28] *Omukama* and *Mukangoma*, the latter wearing a bark cloth decorated with *einoni*, white clay, placed, *okutelekerera*,[29] four *ebyanzi* milk pots of milk from *kitare* cows in front of the drum *Nyabatama* and its consorts. *Abakaraza* (*Abagahe*) and *Abazigaba* officials assisted.[30] Those milk pots would be kept there for four days. Four cows would be slaughtered on the compound behind the shrine for the people to eat. While they were feasting, *Nyabatama* would sound, *ejumera nk'ente*, 'it bellowed like a cow'. It would do so at every new moon and always "by itself".[31]

Plate 13. Cows with crown-shaped horns, *enkondo*, return from the watering-place, Nyabushozi

Special terminology differentiates the shape of cattle horns (Taylor 1959:205). In Runyankore *Nkondo* names a cow with horns turned "inwards and upwards" (Taylor 1959:205), moulded like a crown, *ekondo* (Runyoro, Davis 1938/1952:215), in other words long-horned. We have seen that the Banyoro court ideologists call the king's chief advisors 'Crown-wearers' *Bajwarakondo*, a term they adapt not only from the socio-economic environment of herding but also from that of the forging of metals. So the crown metaphor is twofold. It embraces both the long-horned, *enkondo*, cattle and the hammer, *enyondo*, the symbol of advanced metallurgy. But the name of the kingship shrine *Kagondo* in Nkore and Karagwe is likely to reflect the socio-economic framework of agri-pastoralism combining iron-working with wealth in cattle. Following the exposition of the sources presented in the present chapter this type of system must have predated the formalisation of class distinction constituting the ideological superstructure of the Bunyoro "centre of creation". The symbolic meaning inherent to the name of

the white cow, *Kitare*, in Karagwe ritually associated with *Kagondo* and the *Bayango* clan of the monkey totem, can serve as a marker indicating chronological priority. Subsequently, the overall context of the Karagwe "drum mother" *Nyabugondo*, said to have brought long-horned cattle from Bunyoro, fits into the later general framework of the Bunyoro "centre of creation". A Karagwe non-official tradition connects the birth of *Ruhinda* to *Nyabugondo*'s slavegirl *Njunaki*.[140] This version would conform to the plausible time perspective relevant to the Bunyoro centre. We have seen that the Banyoro know the *Bahinda* as rebels. Nevertheless, according to the overall interpretation of the sources presented here, the *Bahinda* would have been part and parcel of the *Omukama* kingship ideology that the Milk Test traditions justified.

Akasimbo and the *Enyange* Song

It has previously been mentioned that the Banyoro created *Isimbwa* as the progenitor of a perceived *Bacwezi* dynasty. On account of the meaning of "his" name, considering the specific context into which it is applied, I regard *Isimbwa* as a persona that reflects a period of Rutara-speaking people's history. A glimpse of the historical process that *Isimbwa*, "the little planting-spear", encapsulates may still be caught in a dancing style called *akasimbo*, sometimes taught in Karagwe and Ihangiro schools. The dance is performed to the tunes of the *Enyange* song.

Wherever you see cows grazing in East Africa the eye is attracted by the beautiful white cow herons, *enyange*, following the herds indefatigably removing ticks and other vermin from the animals. The *enyange* is commended for its merciful service to cattle and also they do not harm and attack crops like other birds. Brides are praised for being white as the cow heron: *Omugole nayera nk'enyange*.[141] The king's *ekikare* in Karagwe was 'the place of the white cow heron', *Bweranyange*. There is also a song of praise to the king, lauded for the same noble characteristics as attributed to the *enyange*.[142] As the perfect ruler he would have a clean heart (*kwera*, 'to be white' or 'clean') and never cause dissension among his good subjects. The song that follows was performed to give praise to the king wherever he went to stay the night.

It conveyed the message to warn people to keep silent and orderly not to disturb their respected visitor:[143]

Mutayomba mwalalirwa enyange	Don't disturb, the *enyange* has come to visit you
Mutayomba ...	Don't talk angrily
N'omwana w'omuntu	He is a child who has been well brought up
Mutayomba ...	Keep down the disturbance
Boojo nabatagiriza	I beseech you
Mutayomba ...	Don't talk angrily
Boojo nabahobooba	I beg you
Mutayomba ...	Keep calm
Enyange ti nyange	The *enyange* is not the white cow-heron
Mutayomba ...	Don't disturb
N'enyange mabale	He is strong as a rock
Mutayomba ...	Don't talk angrily
N'omwana wa mawe	He is your sibling
Mutayomba ...	Keep down the disturbance
N'omwana w'omuhima	He is a son of a cattle-keeper
Mutayomba	Keep calm

This song, addressed to the *enyange* and the king at the same time, characterise both of them as *Bahima*, *omwana w'omuntu*, literally "a child of a human being". Whether we want to admit it or not, this description is an expression inherent to the self-consciousness of the *Bahima*.[144] But the *Isimbwa* persona invented by Banyoro court ideologists can offer an explanation to the reason why those who came to be called *Bahima/Bahuma* managed to establish themselves in the region. They did not arrive as a group imposing themselves over local people.[145] The reason why they were able to settle in the region in the first place seems to have depended on their capacity to instil fresh blood for the rebuilding of dying herds of the then rulers,

retrospectively called *Bacwezi*. In exchange they were given local daughters in marriage. *Babiito* origin traditions, however, account for the *Isimbwa* persona as being the offspring of the last *Mutembuzi* king *Isaza* and a *Muhuma* daughter. Those traditions must be tied to a later context, when kings married *Bahuma/Bahima* women.[146] The meaning of the *aka-simb-o* dance performed to the rhythms of the *Enyange* song could be understood as a re-enactment of the process of intermarriage, *Isimbwa*, 'the little planting spear', at the same time a song of praise to the king. Women and men are dancing together jumping and waving their hands emulating the white cow heron, symbol of the king, sibling of the *Bahima*.

The phrase *Mutayomba*, 'don't disturb, keep calm, don't talk angrily', repeats as a recurring warning through the refrain of the song. Here the warning is addressed to the subjects of the king. There is another perspective emerging in the praise name given to one of the Karagwe kings, *Ntare*, who was remembered for his long and good rule: *Mihingoetayomba*, said to mean "the man who did not enter enclosures to steal cattle" (Ford and Hall 1947:5). In contrast, kings in the past, known as *Bacwezi*, kept for themselves the cattle of the people, cattle given in good faith as a loan. The evidence presented in this chapter shows that the consequence of such accursed behaviour was loss of both cattle and kingship.

The value interlacustrine peoples attach to cattle cannot be underestimated. It is not limited to specialised cattle raisers. There have never been specialised cattle keepers among the Bakiga in Kigezi. Still one *Mukiga* spokesman said that there was nothing more worth fighting for than cattle and women. In earlier times perspective the loss of cattle must have caused bitterness in the minds of the subjected majority population groups in the region.

Summary and Concluding Remarks

Abandoned some time 500 years ago after about 300 years of occupation, situated in the grasslands of the dry corridor in western Uganda,

the impressive remains of huge 'cattle enclosures' attributed to 'the Stranger', *Bigo bya Mugenyi*, await adequate historical interpretations. *Bigo* has to be explained within the general context of interlacustrine history of cattle keeping in relation to kingship and the development of social stratification. The rich, multi-level and metaphoric content in selected *Bacwezi* traditions has been explored by using datable cattle terminology, archaeological findings symbolically referred to as holes in the ground and the intrinsic meaning of names. A correct sequence for a plausible historical reconstruction has been worked out from a combination of these factors.

The findings of the present chapter suggest that the archaeological remains at *Bigo* constitute mute testimonies of traumatic events, which indelibly were to mark oral traditions of coming generations. A proposed *Bigo* historical account, which has been deciphered and compiled from *Bacwezi* traditions, tells the story of the downfall of the despotic and greedy king of a perceived *Bacwezi* "dynasty", the "cattle maniac" *Mugenyi*, alias *Wamara*, from *ku-mara*, 'to finish'.[147] Voiced in Ihangiro south of the Kagera, the beginning of this narrative is staged in the Underworld, *Okuzimu*, accessible through a hole in the ground. Here reigns King *Kintu*, "the Great Ancestor" or "Man of the People". *Kintu* is the owner of the white cow, *Kitare*, the symbol of kingship and the kingship drum. *Wamara* and his chiefs *Irungu* and *Mugasha* descend through the hole in the ground into *Kintu*'s kingdom. The Great King invites them to enjoy hitherto unknown riches of civilisation. *Kitare* is the most precious. On their departure *Kintu* allows them to go back to their kingdom on earth with the white cow *Kitare*, large herds of cattle and other gifts granted as a loan.

When they did not return the loan, *Kintu* sends *Rufu*, 'Death', to execute the destiny of *Wamara*. *Kitare* falls into a pit full of water. Faithful to his pledge that he would die with the cow, symbol of the kingship drum, *Wamara* and his chiefs drown themselves in the pit. They called the pit *Imara*, because it finished off many people. However, interlacustrine kings are not expected to die. So *Wamara* came back as

a *Mucwezi* spirit and possessed a medium, whose name indicates that the *Mucwezi Wamara* is the new ruler. *Kintu* ordains "his" servant, the *Musiita*, to rule together with the new ruler, the *Mucwezi* spirit *Wamara*.

The *Bahima* in the rolling cattle lands of Mbarara connect *Imara* with the best grazing land of the *Bacwezi*, understood as a place in geography not far from *Bigo*. *Imara* also refers to the abode of the dead, the hole in the ground that brought down a perceived *Bacwezi* "dynasty", the end of which *Wamara* represents. The realities of the visible and the invisible world are continuously expected to interact. Therefore, when the overall context so allows, traditions referring to the immaterial world can be used to explain symbolically corresponding events in the material world of human history. Having said this, it does not appear far-fetched to interpret *Wamara* as a despotic king, who forced "his" subjects to construct the impressive trench systems at *Bigo* with the purpose of defending large herds of cattle. According to the basic redistribution principles of the *-gab-* kingship, those were the cows, which had been given to the king on the premise that he would give them back to the people.

The people tried to reclaim their cattle but it was to no avail. When the subjects, personified by *Misango*, contested the repressive behaviour of the *Bacwezi* by traditional legal means, the *Mucwezi* fighter *Kagoro* killed them. He defended the case of the *Bacwezi*. The account of the mistreatment and death of *Wamara*'s blood-brother, *Kantu,* 'the little guy', precipitates the tragedy to come. It explains how the milk turned red, *mutara*, 'cattle decease'. The appearance of evil creatures and an intolerable foul smell at the river, *otuntu*, calls forth the picture of rotting carcasses. It confirms the proposition that a bovine epidemic was the cause of the problem the *Bacwezi* were facing. The memory of the disaster is perpetuated in the *obusito* totem, widely respected by certain Rutara-speaking clan members. In 1992 it was still remembered by a few herders in Western Uganda, *Wamara*'s emotional lament for the loss of *Miringo*, 'the large herds of many types', verbalises traumatic events in the remote past. But the thin, weak little cow dug up from deep in the ground symbolises that all the cows did not perish at *Bigo*.

The survivor breeds with a bull, perhaps of a different stock, belonging to "other herders passing by". Thus the herds were rebuilt.

There are two main characters in the *Bigo* drama: *Mugenyi* and *Mulindwa*. By the clans of their respective mothers *Mugenyi* is linked to the *Basingo* clan and *Mulindwa* to the *Basiita*. The *Musiita Mulindwa* enjoys popular admiration, while the *Musingo Mugenyi* is too much obsessed with cattle. The hole in the ground reoccurs as a powerful symbol of destruction in a scene staged by the jealous mother of *Mugenyi*. *Mulindwa* barely survives her deadly trap, only to declare the *Basingo* clan cursed, a curse still known all the way from Karagwe to Bunyoro. That is why the *Basingo* in the old kingdom of Nkore were forever forbidden to approach the drum *Bagyendanwa*. *Mulindwa* personifies the *Musiita*, who in the Ihangiro tradition is depicted as *Kintu*'s servant. *Kintu* personifies the people, *Abantu*, so *Mulindwa* cursed the *Basingo* (*Mugenyi*) with popular support. The overall context deciphered from the intrinsic meaning of names in relevant *Bacwezi* traditions consulted suggests the following conclusion: The *Basiita* warriors led the people to overthrow those who finished off (*Wamara*) a perceived "dynasty", who lived in a fortress (*Mugenyi/Basingo*). The *Babiito* court ideologists retrospectively called "them" *Bacwezi*, conflating "their" roles as kings and spirits.

However, before the *Bacwezi* disappeared from the scene, "they" seem to have managed to hold on to power for a little while. The persona *Isimbwa*, "the little planting-spear", effectively demonstrates how "they" made it. As will be further elaborated in the next chapter, clan and court traditions combined depict *Isimbwa* as the Munyoro "grandfather" of a *Bacwezi* genealogy. In view of the overall interpretation of the sources presented *Isimbwa* emerges as a Runyoro device retrospectively describing the mechanism of intermarriage between "the new herders" and local women given as brides in exchange for the cattle, which would instil fresh blood to the dying herds of the current rulers. Correlated with current archaeological research results, the persona *Isimbwa* offers a plausible explanation to the process of social change distinguished by separate development of pastoral and agricultural economies. The onset of this process is deemed to have occurred around AD 1400, i.e. about

one hundred years before *Bigo bya Mugenyi* was deserted. It appears to coincide with "Wamara's famine" documented in sources based on hydrology. The reference may reflect the fate of king *Wamara* of the Ihangiro tradition, who lost *Kintu*'s cow *Kitare*, symbolising cattle and kingship in the remote past.

With the purpose of linking themselves to a local ruling line the *Babiito* court ideologists created the standard regional *Bacwezi* genealogy. They reversed the chronological order of the persona symbolising the human king *Wamara* alias *Mugenyi*, who lost cattle and kingship at Bigo. Conflating "his" role with the role of the "new ruler", the *Mucwezi* spirit *Wamara Rusingo* (Karagwe), the *Babiito* made *Wamara* their "last *Mucwezi*". In consistency with the intrinsic meaning of "his" name they portrayed the *Musiita Mulindwa* as the 'care-taker' or 'protector' of *Bacwezi* drums. The symbols of kingship were said to have been left behind by members of a perceived *Bacwezi* human "dynasty", before they disappeared. Instead of according *Wamara* "his" prior historical position, they promoted their own *Mucwezi Ndahura* as pioneer and "first *Mucwezi*". This development will be highlighted in the next chapter.

The process of social change that *Isimbwa* symbolises was later institutionalised by the *Babiito*, probably some time in the eighteenth century. Proof of *Babiito* state craft regarding this matter can be exposed in traditions of Rutara- as well as West Highlands-speakers. The inception of the social order of class distinction between herders and farmers, or herders, farmers and potters is described in terms of a new Creation, ultimately determined by *Ruhanga*, the Creator, in Bunyoro. Commissioned by the Creator, *Kintu* reoccurs as the Great Ancestor, who controls and sanctions the fate of kings, aristocrats and commoners. Hence *Kintu* is the Great Ancestor who administers the first Milk Test in order to determine the roles of "his" three sons: The youngest one becomes *Omukama*, the Head Milker and King, the middle son qualifies as herder and aristocrat close to the king, *Muhuma*, while the eldest son is given the role of servant or slave, *Omwiru*. Local environmental

and politico-demographic circumstances account for the differences in formation and implementation of the Milk Test theme traditions.

When *Kintu* had accomplished "his" task in Bunyoro, it is said that "he" disappeared in the Underworld. That is where *Wamara*, *Irungu* and *Mugasha* of the Ihangiro tradition found "him" and "his" white cow, *Kitare*. Empowered from Bunyoro *Kintu kya Igaba* administers a different form of Milk Test adjusted to prevailing local socio-economic conditions, determined by the symbolic content inherent to the name of the white cow, *Kitare*; power structures combining iron-working with wealth in cattle. The kingship ritual context of *Kintu*'s white cow has been ascertained for Karagwe. It symbolises the kingship drum, the *Omuyango* incarnate. The Karagwe scene, however, cannot expose any Milk Test tradition. Nevertheless, the *Nyamuhima* tradition recorded in Karagwe could be the founding myth of the *Buhake* client/master relationship. Here the white cow, *Kitare*, reoccurs as a power symbol. A distinguished local elder claimed it to be the property of the cattle-keeping *Bahima*.

It is possible that the name *Bahima* ultimately derives from *enkima*, 'monkey', the totem of the *Bayango* (Karagwe, Buhaya)/*Bayangwe* ("Ankole")/*Banyange* (Burundi). The *Kitare* cow belongs to *Kintu*. The ritual context of the cow has *Bayango* connections, especially in Karagwe. Following the internal logic of the sources themselves *Kintu* may very well represent the Monkey totem people, who the Baganda call *Enkima* and give the position of the first clan.[148] According to a Munyoro elder the Baganda say that *Kintu* came from Heaven and had a tail.[149] The "tail" metaphor is multi-level. In conformity with the name *Akakira*, literally 'small tail', mentioned for the *Abayangwe Abagoboka* clan in Igara, it can allude to the Monkey. But most importantly, the "tail" could refer to the tail of *Kintu*'s cow, *Kitare*. Before the arrival of *Kintu* the cows that existed in the region had been described in terms of "tailless-ness", a symbolic characteristic pertaining to the first owners of the soil. The "tail-less" cow is also white but in Buganda installation rituals it is clear that the cow, *ente*, appears in the shape of a bull-calf.

Kintu's white cow *Kitare* represents female reproduction,[150] because from that cow the cows multiplied.

Kiganda traditions state that in the beginning *Kintu* lived alone with his one and only cow, which provided him with the necessary milk.[151] In 1878 Henry Stanley presented a dynastic list for the Baganda, in which *Kintu* is introduced as the first king of the nationality. Already at that time the seeds to the Hamitic hypothesis had taken root, because we are informed that *Kintu* is another name for *Ham*. Accordingly, "Kintu or Ham" tops the list. Kiwanuka (1971:192) found two more instances of the *Kintu/Ham* analogy in the early literature.[152] The contradiction is obvious. From inside the conceptual framework of the Great Lakes peoples themselves there is no way *Kintu* can represent *Ham*. Neither is there any trace of the Hamite in the current historical linguistic research findings. *Ham* remains an ideological construction created with the view to justify the colonial enterprise. In their racist scheme the colonialists needed to find a counterpart representing the rulers, with whom they could associate in their self-proclaimed task to "civilise" the African people, i.e. "the ruled" (cf. McGaffey 1966:2).

The present chapter has clarified the intrinsic meaning of *Kintu*'s name. "He" should be understood as 'the big man of the people' or the Great Ancestor. So *Kintu* does not only represent the rulers, "he" is 'the Big Man of the People'. Following an interpretation from inside *Kintu* should be regarded as the ancestor of kings and commoners alike. "He" does not only mete out ancestral punishment against a greedy king but also institutes the social order of societies. Therefore, in the name of the Great Ancestor *Kintu*, commissioned by the Creator, the ideologists of the *Babiito* "Empire" builders justified the unequal system of social stratification in the Great Lakes region.

In view of the overall weight of the multi-level evidence brought up for scrutiny the conclusion is that *Kintu* belongs to the Monkey totem people, in Buganda termed *Enkima*.[153] It seems reasonable to suggest that the origin of the name *Bahima* derives from *ab'enkima*, 'the people of the monkey'. In Karagwe the *Bahima* are known as "the owners of the

white cow *Kitare*". But not until the *Babiito* ideologists had formalised the system of social stratification, did the *Bahima/Bahuma* name become a collective denomination for specialised herders conceptualised in terms of socially superior status. Hence the *Bahima/Bahuma* name in reality works as an umbrella term for aristocracy, under which any clan according to environmental and socio-economic context can pass. The Kiziba case in Buhaya, however, has indicated that the *Bahima* class distinction does not necessarily have to depend on specialised pastoralism. Here the *Batundu* iron-workers are mentioned as *Bahima* aristocrats. This finding will be important to take into consideration in the following chapter, when the socio-economic power factors pertaining to the *Bahuma* in the Bunyoro "centre of creation" will be dealt with. But the overall context of *Batundu* clan networks needs special treatment in another work.

The full historical importance of the Monkey totem people also awaits further investigations beyond the scope of the present study. The *Bayango* (Karagwe, Buhaya)/*Bayangwe* (Ankore)/*Banyange* (Burundi) clan respecting the monkey (*enkende/enyangwe*) totem has contributed significant symbolic and ritual traits to kingship ideology in the Great Lakes region. In this respect Karagwe has exposed the clearest ritual evidence, the *Muhinda* king being directly involved. Testifying to a socio-economic context of agri-pastoralism, combining the craft of iron-working with wealth in cattle, the *Kitare* name of the special cow has been interpreted as a symbol of the sacred kingship drum. The Karagwe kingship drum *Nyabatama*, perceived as *Omuyango* incarnate, is said to be housed in the shrine *Kagondo*. The root of the term for the Karagwe shrine reoccurs in the name of the Buganda kingship "non-man-made" throne *Namulondo*, a denomination bringing shared Great Lakes kingship symbolism full circle.

Iron-working remains a crucial economic power base, here evidenced by the word for 'hammer of smith', *e/i/-ny/o/uu/ndo*, symbol of advanced metallurgy extant in all the three interlacustrine language groups.[154] The root of the word for hammer, *-ny/o/uu/ndo*, persists through time exposing kingship metaphoric creativity. Drawing on pre-existing

socio-economic structures the ideologists of the Bunyoro "centre of creation" later added the crown metaphor to the *-ondo* stem. Thus they attached to it a new prestigeous dimension of specialised cattle-keeping symbolised by cattle with large crown-shaped horns. The movable property of cattle may have meant admirable wealth and prestige. Nevertheless, as will be shown, without the economic underpinning of iron production the *Babiito* would not have been able to engage in expansion activities and warfare.

The following chart exposes the development of kingship ideology materially founded in the craft of smelting and forging metals in combination with the longstanding appreciation of cattle, associated with long-horned cattle. Schoenbrun (1993b:47) draws the picture of a general movement in a south to north direction, when Rutarans populated the drier interlacustrine zone ca. AD 1000 to ca. 1500. The kingship symbolic complex based on the linguistic root *-ondo*, 'hammer', would corroborate this historical scenario. Accordingly, the mainstream of cultural influences during the time of *Ntusi* and *Bigo bya Mugenyi* would have developed in a northerly direction.

Table 4. Kingship symbolism linked to the monkey totem people (Kintu)

Kag-ondo	Principal kingship shrine in Karagwe, housed the kingship drum *Nyabatama*, the *Omuyango* incarnate *Bahinda/Bayangwe* shrine in Nkore
Namul-ondo	Buganda "non-man-made" throne Luganda name of a royal mother[155]
-nk-ondo	"crown"-shaped large cattle horns (Runyankore)
-k-ondo	'crown' (Runyoro)
Bajwarak-ondo	the king's 'Crown-wearers' in Bunyoro
Nyabug-ondo	"drum mother" in Karagwe, said to have brought long-horned cattle from Bunyoro

Kingship symbolism particularly associated with the ritual power of the

Bayango has been demonstrated in the Rutara-speaking, *Bahinda*-led kingdom of Karagwe. In the Buhaya kingdom of Ihangiro members of the ruling *Bahinda* clan controlled and transferred the tradition about the fall of *Wamara* and the origin of the *Bacwezi* system of political and spiritual kingship. *Bahima* specialised herders in the former kingdom of Nkore know the *Bacwezi* traditions told about a perceived *Bacwezi* "dynasty" they connect with *Bigo bya Mugenyi*. The question whether the *Bahima* who transfer the traditions are offspring to those who built the trench system needs to be answered in the overall historical context of the *Basiita/Basiingo*, awaiting further research.

We now turn our attention to the Bunyoro scene, exploring the *Babiito* "centre of Creation", where the perception of the *Bacwezi* was created and verbalised. An analysis departing from a proposed *Bacwezi* "genealogy" of *Isimbwa*'s "descendants" will unfold aspects of the multi-level history hidden in the official records.

Endnotes

1 McMaster (Uppsala, Nov. 2001) pointed out that Oliver had ignored Monika Wilson's establishment of the consistent separation of women and cattle. Nilotes do not separate women and cattle (Ehret 1971:35), a trait that is Central Sudanic. In the interlacustrine societies under scrutiny women are strictly forbidden to milk cows (cf. e.g. Trowell and Wachsmann 1953:15 and Elam 1973).

2 Apparently, Katoke applied the same model as the colonial writers Ford and Hall, who described the population of Karagwe in terms of the "ethnologically separate tribes; the Banyambo indigenous Bantu agriculturalists and the pastoral Bahima, believed to be Half Hamite" ("The History of Karagwe", TNR, 24, 1997:3).

3 Karagwe: Mwalimu G. Kasenene, BFFM:9, 1991.

4 Nkore: Mzee A. Murumba and Mzee P. Garobungo, BFFM:529, 1992, Mzee G.W. Katondwaki, BFFM:548, 1992; Igara: Mzee G.W. Binyindo, BFFM:652, 1992.

5 Rwanda: Mzee Gacinya and Mzee Muyombane, BFFM:718, 1992. Igara: Mzee B. Mubangizi, who had done extensive research in the history of his people (cf. Karugire 1971:4), said that the *enyambo* cows came to Ankore from Rwanda and Karagwe (BFFM:655, 1992).

6 Nkore: Rev. J.W. Kashaka, BFFN/6:39, 1992.

7 Karagwe: Ta J. Kakuba, BFFM:126, 1991.

8 Karagwe: Ta J. Kakuba, BFFM:125, 1991.

9 The meaning of the name *Karagwe* can be deciphered accordingly: *Ka-* is a locative prefix ; *-rag-* is derived from *ku-raga*, 'say good-bye; promise; choose the heir' (Taylor 1959:67); *-we* can be composed of two elements, *-u-* , which denotes the intensive form indicating something 'final, definite, conclusive or absolute' and *-e* being defined as a passive form, which can designate the place where something is done (p.c. from Lodhi, Uppsala, 13/11 2006).

10 For *kutama* Bona-Baisi's (1960:167) Luhaya dictionary has *kushoba = kuhaba*. In Kinyankore kuhaba means 'to lose one's way' (Taylor 1959:55) and kushoba 'to be wrong' (Taylor 1959:73).

In a wider Bantu-speaking context kutama means 'to come to an end' or 'to get finished, move away' (p.c. with Lodhi, 19/12, 2005)

11 Contradicting the official perception that *Ruhinda* brought *Nyabatama* to Karagwe, a *Muhinda* elder said that *Nyabatama* was founded by *Nono*, a proposition that appears to fit better into the general picture emerging from the sources presented (information given to Stanislaus Bashungwa by Ta Musolini Rumanyika, BFFM:1, 1986).

12 In Karagwe and Buhaya *obwamba* and *eshagama* are synonyms for blood. Schoenbrun (1990:534) specifies the meaning of the latter, *eshagama*, for the blood of cattle. Ehret (1974:83) had suggested it to be a Southern Cushitic loanword in what Schoenbrun later classified as Great Lakes Bantu. It appears to be archaic, presently getting out of usage. It is found in ritual contexts. The last drum-keeper of Karagwe, Mzee Kajungu, said that blood, *eshagama*, from the white cow, *Kitare*, mixed with *eitaka ly'empiki*, 'soil from a small ant-hill' was used to anoint the kingship drum *Nyabatama* (BFFM:138, 1991). Sacrificial blood in *Endagano Empya*, the Luhaya New Testament (1972) was translated *eshagama* (see for example Hebr. 10:4). A local informant said that the incidence of the word *es(h)agama* is confined to Rutara-speaking people's language, locally identified as Runyakitara (information from President Y.K. Museveni, Kampala, 27/5 2006).

13 Karagwe: Ta J. Kakuba, BFFN/4:33-34, 1991.

14 Karagwe: Ta J. Kakuba, BFFN/4:34, 1991.

15 Igara constitutes one of the *Bashambo* successor states or principalities of Mpororo.

16 This information was confirmed by Rev. J.W. Kashaka (BFFM:600, 1992).

17 Mzee Yowasi Bwirizayo (BFFM:659-661, 1992). He used *njeru*, not *Kitare* (cf. Schoenbrun 1993b:48) for 'white', because after King *Ntare*, 'lion', of Nkore had died it was taboo to mention the king's name.

18 S. Bashungwa (Dar-es-Salaam, Sept. 1986) gave the term *engwebe* for Karagwe, in Ihangiro rendered the variation *enchwele* (Rev. S. Machumu, BFFM:394, 1991). For South Western Uganda Steinhart (1981:121) notes the term *ndora* for 'short-horned cattle', while *enshagara* is the local word for 'long-horned'.

19 We take note of the fact that the mentioned researchers for Buhaya (and Karagwe) make the distinction that *engaju*, (without marking any long 'a'), refers to long-horned cattle. For Bunyoro Davis (1938/1952:124) has *engaaju*, 'large cow with long horns'. However, the following consulted sources say that the term *-gaaju*, simply designates different shades of the colour brown without any reference to horn-size. Luhaya: 'a light brown cow', *elikutukura kake* (Bona-Baisi 1960:50), Runyoro: 'a brown coloured type of cattle' (*Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro, BFFM:886, 1992) and Runyankore: 'the cattle colour brown'. There is special terminology concerning the shape of the horns, or absence of horns (Taylor 1959:205).

20 A variation of the same root is found in Kimeru, Central Kenya, *-ngooji*, specifically referring to a cow with long horns (p.c. with Anne Kubai, Uppsala 21/4 2007), which means that Bantu-speakers beyond the borders of the Great Lakes region share words and concepts pertaining to pastoralism.

21 The quotations are drawn from Vansina (2004:45), who applied Henige's terminology for Ruganzu Ndori in Rwanda.

22 Karagwe: Ta J. Kakuba, BFFN/4:33, 1991.

23 Schoenbrun (1993b:45) notes that there is extremely scanty archaeological evidence for cattle.

24 According to Guthrie (1967, Vol. I, p. 139) the Proto-Bantu root **-tádè* constitutes an "osculant cluster". In "the northern Bantu area" it means 'stone'. The same root takes on the meaning of 'iron-ore', which is found scatttered, mostly in north-east. In a belt from mid-west to mid-south the meaning changes to 'iron'. Noteworthy, according to current historical linguistic research findings, Bantu-speakers did not forge iron until they learnt the craft from Central Sudanic-speakers.

25 The root *-tale/tare* 'iron, iron ore' can be found in sources of all the three Great Lakes Bantu successor languages of concern for this study; NORTH NYANZA: Luganda, Trowell (1941:49), RUTARA: Runyoro, information from S. Byakutaga (1991), Runyankore, Taylor (1959:170), WEST HIGHLANDS: Ikirundi, G. Celis et E. Nzikobanyanka (1976).

26 P.c. from Lodhi, Uppsala, 16/4 2007.

27 Karagwe: Mzee Kajungu, BFFM:132/141, 135, 1991.

28 Karagwe: *Kinyanyengoma* Bachorobekwa, BFFM:55, 1991.

29 *Kutelekerera* means 'to pray and give presents to a spirit', while the verb *kwetongesa* implies words only (explanation by Mwalimu Venant Rutaromba Patel during the interview with Mzee J. Kakuba, BFFN/4:18, 1991). *Kuterekyerera* has been rendered 'to offer (to the spirits)', spelt with *y* after the *k* in the Runyankore/Rukiga dictionary (Taylor 1959:80). Baitwababo (1972:5), from the perspective of the old Mpororo kingdom, stressed the element of atonement in the *kuterekyerera* concept.

30 Karagwe: *Kinyanyengoma* Bachorobekwa, BFFM:78A, 1991.

31 Karagwe: *Kinyanyengoma* Bachorobekwa, BFFM:68, 1991.

32 Ibid

33 The *Omukama* of Kyamutwara would drink milk only from a white cow, just as we will see that *Wamara* in the Ihangiro tradition was given milk from his favourite cow, *Kitare*. The milk from the *Kitare* cow would never be given out from the *kikale*.

34 Sutton's article "Ntusi and Bigo. Farmers, cattle-herders and rulers in western Uganda, AD 1000-1500" (*Azania* 33, 1998:39-70) gives the reader an extensive overview of the setting and context of archaeological excavations undertaken here from the earliest surveys in 1921-1922 until the BIEA campaigns in 1987-1991. We are also updated on the current state of research interpretations of the results.

35 *Bwera* is a place name that here refers to "a county-sized territory south of the Katonga river" (Buchanan 1979:104).

36 *Mubende* is the designation of a district in the Central Region of Uganda, presently inhabited by mainly Luganda and Runyoro-speaking peoples (Rwabwogo 1994:82, cf. map).

37 Characteristic of what Posnansky called "the Bigo ware" is a knotted grass rouletted pattern (1969:135) with the addition of reddish-brown ochre in varying forms of application (Lanning 1970:44). Lanning's (1953:56) source had described the Ntusi grain cultivation settlement situated 20 km from Bigo as "by far the largest settlement yet recorded in east or central Africa with the exception of the Islamic cities on the coast, Kilwa and Gedi, though there are a number of West African parallels". When I visited the Bigo and Ntusi sites in 1995 I was told that 2000 people are estimated to have lived at Ntusi, where heavy shards were lying around from huge roulette-decorated pots with red ochre applications at the rims.

38 The whole site of Bigo measures 10 km^2 surrounded and intertwined by an estimated 3 m deep trench system, at some places even more than 4,5 m deep and cut into solid rock. In his archaeological report Posnansky (1969:144) remarked that "more than 200.000 cubic metres of earth and rock were moved in the digging of the ditches alone. Such an effort over a relatively short period of time implies control over a labour force of perhaps several thousand men for a period of years".

39 Dr Kamuhangire, the Director of the Department of Antiquities and Museums in Uganda, has written a survey of "Recent Archaeological Research in South-Western Uganda" (*UJ*, Vol. 42, 1995).

40 In his article on "Ntusi and Bigo" Sutton (1998:63, note 4) clarifies that some commentators had argued for a later occupation of *Bigo*, misled by a misprint in Posnansky's (1969:135) report. The result of one of the three radiocarbon tests, GXO 519, was determined by the laboratory as AD 1370+/–90, but was misprinted '1570' (Cf. Schmidt 1990:263).

41 The *ekitambiro*, 'cult place' dedicated to *Mugenyi* and *Ndahura Bacwezi* spirits, situated on the top of a mound containing deposits of ash, broken pottery etc., appears to be a shrine instituted

by people of recent times (information by Dr Kamuhangire at Bigo 24/5 1995). Gifts of cowrie shells, coffee beans, modern coins and paper money are placed in small baskets below a young euphorbia tree.

42 My longstanding experience of language and culture in the Great Lakes region had taught me that a personal name always has a meaning that in one way or the other mirrors the specific situation that prevailed at that person's birth. I shared with M.A. McMaster my awareness that names carry messages that could reveal history. She helped me to develop a method to interpret history from names in *Bacwezi* traditions. On hearing the recordings and reading the transcriptions of episodes told by *Bahima* elders, she pointed out that that the names in the traditions "encapsulate" history. Only thanks to Mary McMaster's methodological insights she so generously shared (October-November 2001 in Uppsala and then by electronic mail), an adequate sequence for history could be suggested for selected *Bacwezi* traditions. My gratefulness to her is beyond expression. Special thanks also to the *Bahima* elders the late Mzee Israel Katuuka and his uncle Mzee Elfas Rwoya for sharing the *Miringoigana* tradition. Of great impact was Mzee Katuuka's voice expressing the grief in the lament for the dying cow, a grief still captured as heartbreaking after many centuries of transmission through the generations.

43 Father Samson had first recorded this tradition. Assisted by a member of the local *Bahinda* clan, who helped him to present it in Luhaya with a French translation, Césard (1927:447) later cross-checked it.

44 Nine is the auspicious number, especially evident in Bunyoro, Tooro and Buhaya. *Omwenda wenda ebintu*, 'nine merits if you want to get something extremely good, then it must be expressed in terms of nine'. It takes nine months for a child to develop in the womb. So number nine is the symbol of fertility, good luck, prosperity and good wishes (BFFM:1068, 1992, from the context of the Batooro).

45 *Ki-* is an amplicative Bantu prefix, which also reflects seniority (p. c. from Lodhi, Uppsala 6/1 2002). Beattie (1971:35) noted that "the prefix *ki-* sometimes conveys the notion of great size"

46 Electronic communication with M.A. McMaster, 13/10 2002. For a richly explored, religio-historical perspective on *Kintu* see Benjamin Ray's (1991) study entitled *Myth, Ritual and Kingship in Buganda*.

47 Roscoe (1932:26) reported about the incidence of holes in the ground associated with iron-working, "regarded as entrances to the home of the god of the underworld, and [...] considered too sacred to be visited without offerings of cattle, being always approached in fear and trembling."

48 *Enkorogo* is the royal term for both food and drink substantiated for Buhaya: *Omukama* E. Rukamba, BFFN/2:20, 1991 (Kyamutwara) and Karagwe: Ta P. Kapele, BFFN/4:23, 1991, *Kinyanyengoma* Bachorobekwa, BFFM:83, 1991. Evidence form Kiziba shows that *Enkorogo* is connected to milking, because *omukorogi* is the royal term for 'milker', *ente y'enkorogo* meaning 'the king's cows' (*Omwana* Amelia Mutahangarwa, BFFM:290, 1991). *Enkorogi* as the term for 'the king's herd of cattle' is also confirmed for Bunyoro (*Omubiito* Isaya Karubanga, BFFM:906, 1991).

49 In his classical work *The Idea of the Holy* Rudolf Otto (1923/1970:30) has shown that sacredness to the mind appears as an object of horror and dread the same time as it attracts and fascinates.

50 We take note of the fact that in the *Babiito*-led old Buhaya kingdom of Kiziba, the clan associated with *Irungu*, the *Batundu*, are regarded as *Bahima*, although they are not specialised cattle keepers (*Omwana* Amelia Mutahangarwa, BFFM:298, 1991).

51 Césard's (1927:450) translation of *kubonekya ow' omukama*: '[generally] serve at the king's table', seems to reflect the local kingship context mirrored in the Ihangiro tradition. In Runyankore *okubonetsya omugabe* means 'to serve the king milk' (Rev. J.W. Kashaka, BFFM:588, 1992). Here kingship ideology behind the term *okubonetsya* implies that the life-giving milk is regarded as perfect food for interlacustrine kings, *Abakama*, 'the Head Milkers'.

52 Kyamutwara: *Omukama* E. Rukamba, Pocket Note Book 2:73, 1991. Ehret (1998:271-272) postulates that the proto-Mashariki Bantu term for 'cow', **-gòmbè* may be traced to the initial knowledge of cattle that spread from the Great Lakes region among a great number of Bantu-speaking peoples.

53 *Iziba* means *kina ky'amaizi*, 'a hole full of water' (Bona-Baisi 1957:70) and not a swamp, *marais*, as in Césard's (1927:452) French translation.

54 *Mushobozi* is a title derived from *kushôbora*, 'to be able' (Luhaya: Bona-Baisi 1957:167), who had the power to 'explain' as well as 'decide', *kushoborora* (Runyankore/Rukiga: Taylor 1959:73).

55 *Ebihingire* perhaps refers to the fees given to spirit mediums for consultations. However, the term is derived from the context of marriage negotiations: *kuhingira* means 'give a girl in marriage' (Taylor, 1959:57). This terminology reinforces the interpretation that the *kubandwa* cult membership is to be understood in terms of a marriage contract.

56 *Kushenga*, 'serve a new master' in Runyankore/Rukiga (Taylor 1959:73).

57 P.c. from Lodhi, Uppsala, 22/11 2006. I am indebted to Lodhi for assistance in reaching this conclusion.

58 Schoenbrun (1997:155) has root no. 234 for Ziba: *-shenga* 'oppose, resist, rebel'. Confirmation communicated from Mrs Adolphina Kateka, Stockholm, 6/1 2002.

59 de Heusch (1966:38) wrongly interpreted *Imara* as a representation of a battle-field where the *Bacwezi* succumbed to Nilotic military forces.

60 I am grateful to Holger Benettsson, who drew my attention to the relevance of the location of *Imara* some 30 years ago. Following the Ihangiro tradition, de Heusch (1966:38) wrongly points to Karagwe as a plausible location of *Imara*.

61 The strongest traditional testimonies about the *Bacwezi* (cf. Posnansky 1966:6) came from the *Bahima* in Nyabushozi county, Mbarara (Nkore), Mzee Elfaz Rwoya, Mzee Israel Katuuka and Rev. James Washington Kashaka. In the rolling savannah grassland of Rwanda Rwera, associated with *Bwera*, an area associated with the *Bacwezi* (Williams 1938:35), Mzee I. Katuuka vividly recited the drama, in gesture, sound and mimic, the wonderful achievements and characteristics of the *Bacwezi*. Generally, *Bwera* and *Rwera* are place names that refer to open flat land with white mist (information en route to *Bigo bya Mugenyi* by Dr Kamuhangire, who guided my excursion to the ancient sites 24/5 1995).

62 Nkore: Mzee Elfas Rwoya, BFFM:565, 1992.

63 McMaster thought that *Wamara* would "personify of *the end* of the dynasty, not the dynasty itself" (electronic communication 13/10 2002).

64 The earthworks systems found throughout the grasslands of western Uganda exhibit a large number of mounds and pits. The larger pits tended to be bell-shaped, sometimes 4 m deep, probably used as rubbish pits (for Munsa, see Robertshaw 1997:12-13, Ntusi, Sutton 1998:47). Lanning (1960:187) mentions "bottle-shaped grain pits" excavated at the earthworks of Kibengo. Here "deep and narrow pits have been cut traversely across all the great ditches", allegedly for the purpose of trapping game. The holes in the ground that Roscoe (1932:26) reported about were held by the Government geologist to be the remains of shafts from which ironstone was dug. In the Karagwe *kikare* at Bweranyange a deep hole in the ground is said to be where *Omukama Ndagara* (1820-1853, Katoke 1975:139) forged iron, as shown on a photograph taken by Sister May-Britt Hilbur in the 1950's.

65 Information from *Omukama* E. Rukamba, BFFN/5:119, 1992. *Imara* was feared and the Banyambo associate *Imara* with the name for the burial place of the Karagwe kings, *Kahwera*, a place name derived from the verb *kuhwa*, 'to finish, end' (information given by Prof. Katoke, Seminar on the *Bacwezi*, Bukoba, 7-8/10 1992).

66 Nkore: Mzee Patrick Kirindi, BFFM:634, 1992.

67 Again I am indebted to M.A. McMaster, who, when I was going astray, reminded me of the basic principle of analysis here: *the meaning of names when translated*. McMaster pointed out that Nyakatura (1973:37-38) mistakenly calls the man *Mi-singa*, probably because he associated

the name with the more familiar *Basingo*, derived from the root *-sing-* (as in *Basingo*). *Kagoro* "fought" *Misango* as Fisher has it. This indicates that Nyakatura was not aware of the implications of the intrinsic meanings of the names (electronic communication 17/10 2002).

68 In Karagwe *omugorora* is a bush-like tree with elliptic opposite leaves, used to mark out landownership. It can also be planted as a shrine dedicated to *Kazoba*, the spirit of the sun, or to *Wamara*. Katoke (1975:48) notes that *omugorora* and *omuramura* are alternative Runyambo names for this tree belonging to the *Dracaena* species. The two synonyms carry similar meanings pertaining to judicial contexts, Runyambo/Luhaya: 'to judge'; Runyankore: *kuramura*, 'to make peace with'; Luganda: 'to judge' (Taylor 1959:68). For Bunyoro Davis (1938/1952:183) has *muramura*, 'tree used for building spirit huts'.

69 Karagwe: *Kinyanyengoma* Bachorobekwa, BFFM:83, 1991. Kinyankore (Taylor 1959:53) has *ku-gorora*, 'stretch out', (do ironing of cloths) straighten; direct (e.g. workers), mark (e.g. books in school). Luganda (Snoxall 1967:95) has *ku-golola*, 'raise up'; *kù-g. omùkonò*, raise the arm, ... correct mistakes. *Obu-goro-roki* is the Luhaya translation for 'righteousness' as in Romans 5:17 (*The New Testament and Psalms in Haya*, United Bible Societies N.T., 1968).

70 McMaster, electronic communication 17/10 2002.

71 This interpretation, again, has been inspired by McMaster's insights communicated in October-November 2001 in Uppsala, then by electronic mail.

72 Anne Kubai pointed out that all the details in the traditions have meaning. The reason for *Kantu*'s death lies in the hands of *Wamara*'s wives, who caused "him" to go outside the cattle enclosure catching the bull in the act of mating. Thus *Kantu* was kicked to death because he saw what he should not see: the sacred rite of reproduction, the origin of life itself in the charge of women (p.c. Uppsala, 27/8 2006).

73 Red, *okutukura*, is regarded as an ambiguous and dangerous colour.

74 Credit goes to McMaster for this information, Nov. 2001 in Uppsala.

75 For *mastisis*: Guidry, A.J., O'Brien, C.N. and Douglas, L.W., "A bovine mammary endothelial/epithelial cell culture model of the blood/milk barrier", *Canadian Journal of Veterinary Research*, 62 (2):117-121, 1998, Apr., Abstract. I am most obliged to the librarian Pamela Enrici, Duluth, who went out of her way to consult every veterinary source available at a time when this information was urgently needed (electronic communication 24/11 2001).

76 Seven is the inauspicious number in interlacustrine culture.

77 Nkore: Mzee I. Katuuka, Israel, BFFM:571-572, 1992.

78 McMaster proposed this translation by electronic communication (6/11 2002).

79 Nkore: Mzee P. Kirindi, BFFM:630, 1992.

80 Mzee P. Kirindi was the only informant who had prepared a written document in response to the interview guide given to him in advance. His account about the *Bacwezi* starts with the *Kantu* episode but it resembles the one of Nyakatura so much that I preferred to cite the latter here. However, the fact that Kirindi tells the story about the *Bacwezi* in the right sequence for history, beginning with the end, which actually *is* the beginning, lends him credibility. It is evident that Mzee P. Kirindi had done extensive research on the history and culture of his people ever since he was the key assistant collecting material for Dr H.F. Morris' book: *The Heroic Recitations of the Bahima of Ankole*, published in 1964.

81 H.K. Karubanga's (1948) clan list gives *Obusito* as totem of the *Abacwezi* clan. I am grateful to Princess Elisabeth Bagaya of Tooro, who offered a copy of this list. Bunyoro: *Omucwezikati*, 'woman of the *Mucwezi* clan', Y. Kabanyoro avoiding the *Obusito*, explained that *Obusito* means 'milk from a cow four days after mating' (BFFN/7:22, 1992). *Mucwezi* Jesse Ndahura said that *Amata g'obusito* as totem of the *Abacwezi* clan either referred to 'milk from a cow four days after mating' or 'calving' (BFFN/7:17, 1992).

82 Kyamutwara: *Omukama* E. Rukamba, BFFM:153, 1989.

83 *Bihogo* names a red-brown (strawberry-coloured) cow, while *Mpuuga* is a cow that is white under the forelegs (Taylor 1959:205). Schoenbrun (1993b:49) enters the cattle term **-puuga*, 'an animal that is splotched with a mixture of black and white', as a North Rutaran cattle term after about 1450.

84 I am grateful to Mr Francis Katana, a Munyankore and the then Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of the Republic of Uganda in Copenhagen, who kindly assisted me with this translation (24/2 1999).

85 Acknowledgements to Alice Komujuni, who helped me on this matter in Uppsala, 1/5 2005.

86 The *Abaitira* have clan brothers/sisters in Karagwe, also of the *Obusito* totem. According to Cory and Hartnoll (1945, Appendix V:3) the *Bahutu/Baitira* clan in Karagwe, originating in "Ankole", keep the avoidance of "the milk of a cow whose calf has been covered by a bull", a description that appears to conform to the concept of *obusito* above. They were "keepers of the king's millet seeds for beer". *Kinyanyengoma* Bachorobekwa, Karagwe, (BFFM:60, 1991) said that the *Abasiita* together with the *Abaitira* used to take the first harvest of finger millet to the king for blessing. So perhaps the reference to *Abaitira* herdsmen could apply for the socio-economic context of agri-pastoralism, which Sutton (1998:43) suggests prevailed at *Bigo* around 100 years before those places were finally deserted.

87 Nkore: Mzee I. Katuuka, BFFM:574, 1992.

88 The carcass of cattle that died from anthrax had to be burnt (McMaster, electronic communication 18/10 2002).

89 Meanings of mentioned cattle colour terms:
Bihogo, 'strawberry' (Taylor 1959:205), 'red-brown'*
Ngabo, 'many large white patches' (ibid), 'black and white'*
Kyozi, 'black' (ibid), 'all black'*
Nkara, 'black and brown' (ibid), (*amakara*, 'ashes')
Mayenje, 'medium white spots' (ibid), 'whitish stripes over some parts'*
Gaaju, 'chestnut brown or dark brown'*, in Karagwe 'light brown'.
*Information from Coleb Kamugungunu, Kampala, 10/3 1987.

90 Butumbi was the name of an old kingdom situated near Lake Edward (Dunbar 1959:108).

91 Nkore: Mzee E. Rwoya, BFFM:563-564, 1992.

92 Nkore: Mzee I. Katuuka, BFFM:574-575, 1992.

93 *ku-rema*, 'be too much for'; *ku-remwa* 'be unsuccessful; give up' (Taylor 1959:69). I am grateful to Mr F. Katana for offering a translation of *Bararemwe* (in telephone communication with Copenhagen 13/10 2002).

94 McMaster, electronic communication 15/10 2002. Nyakatura (1973:23) mentions *Rusama* as the name of "the Bachwezi royal drum". According to tradition the name *Baralemwa* was subsequently bequeathed to the smith *Kihesi* of the Bunyoro *Bamooli* Bushbuck clan in whose care the *Bacwezi* are said to have left the area of *Bwera* (Posnansky 1969:144). See Chapter nine for further clarifications.

95 I am indebted to Mrs Betsy Katana, wife of the Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Republic of Uganda, Copenhagen, who kindly assisted in translating parts of this tradition 4/11 2002.

96 Schoenbrun's (1998:89, note 46) information obtained from the archaeologist A. Reid shows "that horn core evidence from Ntusi indicates that the long-horned cows were present there".

97 Nkore: Mzee Katuuka, BFFM:569-570, 1992.

98 Nkore: Rev. James W. Kashaka, BFFM:602, 1992.

99 Nkore: Mzee I. Katuuka, BFFM:570, 1992.

100 Nkore: Mzee E. Rwoya, BFFM:565, 1992.

101 Comment by McMaster, Uppsala, Nov. 2001.

102 Conclusion reached by the assistance of McMaster, Uppsala, Nov. 2001.

103 In the wider East African Bantu-speaking world the name *Ba-singo* carries connotations of defence building like the Kiswahili *kizingo*, 'a fortress' and *kuzinga*, 'to surround' (p.c. with Lodhi, Uppsala 16/9 2005). Such a conceptual framework behind the name would strengthen the argument that a *Basingo* royal clan were those who ordered the construction of the defensive earthworks at *Bigo* or who lived in a fortress or fortified dwelling.

104 From the general Bantuist perspective Lodhi added the meaning 'protector' (p.c. 24/8 2007, Uppsala).

105 *Ku-kiita* is a Bantu verb that means 'to fight' (p.c. with Lodhi, Uppsala 16/9 2005). So judging from the intrinsic meaning of their name, the *Basiita* must have risen to power by means of war.

106 Referring to the then generally accepted chronology deriving from court traditions (Oliver 1963:181) Buchanan (1974:116) placed "the *Bacwezi* period" from the 13th to the 15th centuries. But in view of the sequence she (1979:106) had discerned for clan migrations, she tended to push it back half a century. Thus she did not hold that "the *Bacwezi* period" would fully coincide with Posnansky's (1966:5) "Bigo culture", suggested to have lasted as long as *Ntusi/ Bigo* had been populated, i.e. until c. 1500.

107 Buchanan (1974) in Chapter IV, "Early Migration and Settlement from the Northeast" used the term *Sanga* for the long-horned cows that she ascribed to the influx of the *Basiita* and *Basingo* clans. It is problematic to employ a term coined by the British for cattle, which could have been brought by migrants she posits for a period c. 12th century AD. Coleb Kamugungunu from Mbarara district said that *Sanga* for long-horned cattle is not an indigenous term (Kampala 10/3 1987). Mwalimu G. Kasenene (Nyakaiga, Karagwe 7/3 1991) maintained that *Sanga* is a mixture of longhorned *Nyambo* or *Nkole* cows with the humped (*zebu*) cattle imported from Sukuma (cf. Reid 1991:98). In his work *Pastoralism in Africa* A. B. Smith (1993:179) cites a commonly held view about possible origins of *Sanga* cattle. Pastoral immigrants in contact with the lands across the Red Sea could have brought with them the *zebu* stock, "which was the basis of the *Sanga* breed so common throughout Eastern and Southern Africa today". Caroline Grigson's (1991:139) research results made her suggest that "African domestic cattle originated in Africa as Sangas (of which the Egyptian longhorn was one type)". But she admits that much more work needs to be done to prove her model correct.

108 I am obliged to McMaster for this interpretation (Nov. 2001, Uppsala).

109 Katana said that *Isimbwa* is a Runyoro name (telephone communication with Copenhagen, April 2000).

110 The reader is reminded of the close affiliation between Luhaya and Runyoro.

111 Acknowledgements for this translation to Dr Adolphina Kateka, Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania, Stockholm (telephone communication 9/12 2001).

112 The work edited by Webster (*Chronology, Migration and Drought in Interlacustrine Africa*, 1979) was carried out in a spirit of scholarly enthusiasm at the prospects of using hydrology as an aid in dating interlacustrine history. Detailed chronologies for the whole region were reconstructed. Basing their data on oral traditions corroborated with recorded levels of Nile water, these researchers overlooked the multi-level, retrospective and anachronistic quality inherent to the oral traditions at hand. In the next chapter I will touch on the problem of chronology and dating in relation to *Babiito* origin traditions.

113 This perspective applies for the Karagwe traditions Ruth Berger (1966:157-158) recorded, where *Wamara* appears as *grandfather* of *Isimbwa* and *Kagoro*. Therefore, when the Karagwe "myth-makers" introduce *Wamara* as grandfather, their presentation would mirror the correct sequence of events that may have taken place in the remote past.

114 The Kinyankore traditions relate that when the *Bacwezi* faced a lot of problems "they" sent for the famous diviner *Kakara ka Shagama*, who read the signs of the divination explaining that it was time for "them" to leave. But "they" did not want to leave so suddenly, so "they" requested

"him" to prescribe a medicine that would enable "them" to stay longer. The translation of "his" name explains the role of the diviner: *Ka-kara* is derived from *kwi-kara*, 'wait a little' (Runyankore/Rukiga, Taylor 1959:94) and the meaning of *Shagama*, 'blood', touches on fundamental aspects of life and procreation. As regards "*Igaba*'s drum sons" *Omukama* E. Rukamba explained the supremacy of Bunyoro by the name of the first drum son, *Shagama*: "he" came out of the first blood of the woman, known as *Njunaki*. Banyankore traditions are explicit about the prescription *Kakara ka Shagama* recommended: the slave-girl *Njunaki* heroically had to enter *Wamara*'s bed and conceive *Ruhinda*, whose name is specifically linked to "his" mother: *Ruhinda rwa Njunaki* (Mzee I. Katuuka, BFFM:570-572, 1992; Rev. G.W. Kashaka, BFFM:606-607, 1992).

115 Banyankore elders maintain that *Njunaki*'s clan affiliation was *Omuyangwe*. Although Rev. J.W. Kashaka (BFFM:604, 1992) said that it is not known which clan *Njunaki* is, Mzee J.M. Mutembeya (BFFM:545, 1992) and Dr Joshua Muwumba (personal information Kampala 23/1 1992) did not hesitate about *Njunaki*'s *Bayangwe* clan affiliation.

116 In the version recorded by Bamunoba (1973:4) the names of *Ruhanga*'s sons were *Kairu, Kariisa*, 'the little herder' and *Kakama*.

117 White Fathers, "Enquetes sur les moeurs et coutume indigenes", Chapitre VII, La Mort Les Funerailles Le Deuil, Diocese de Bukoba, B.E.A. n.d., p. 9.

118 Bunyoro: *Omubiito* Harbert Kimera, BFFN/7:31, 1992.

119 Beattie (1971:35) suspected that Fisher's informants, the kings of Bunyoro and Tooro, were influenced by the biblical creation account. The new converts may have been influenced by the biblical account. In spite of this fact, it does not seem likely that they would have been able to describe the order of priority of the creation of the world in such an authentic Kinyoro way, as Beattie comments, unless they had been familiar with similar ideas before.

120 P.c. from Lodhi (Uppsala, 16/9 2005).

121 Cory Paper No. 168, 1944:5.

122 *Imana*'s sons are recorded in the reverse order in the Bushuubi account "*Tusi, Hutu* and *Twa*"; thus the youngest son comes first, while in all the other accounts it is the eldest one that is mentioned first. That could be due to the fact that Bushuubi and Rwanda lie off the mainstream of cultural and political influences from Bunyoro.

123 According to Lodhi this pattern is common in Oriental didactic stories and in Kiswahili (p.c. Uppsala 16/4 2007).

124 Bugufi: Mzee D. Semuguruka, BFFM:451, 1991.

125 Bunyoro: *Omubiito* Isaya Karubanga, BFFM:921-922, 1992. Karubanga described how he himself had gone as the king's messenger to Karagwe twice. Father Charles Nkende, at the Catholic Church centre in Hoima a *Muhinda* himself, confirmed the Kinyoro perception that the *Bahinda* were regarded as rebels in Bunyoro. Accordingly, his ancestors who stayed in Bunyoro after Ruhinda had rebelled had to go into hiding (BFFN/7:73, 1992).

126 In the 1970's we found some *Bahima* living in the village of Ahakishaka along the mountain ridge. The *Bahima* would herd their cattle down in the Kishanda valley, where grass was plenty for their cattle and other livestock. But modernisation made it necessary for the *Bahima* to live on the ridge to get access to schools for their children, although many boys were sent down to the valley to herd the family cattle. The family fathers seemed to commute between the ridge and the valley together with some of the children.

127 Dornboos in his work *Regalia Galore* (1975:27) quotes Oberg (1940/1970:134) and Stenning (1960:169).

128 Karugire (1971:53) concludes for the Banyankore that no *Bahima* had any power of life and death over the *Bairu* independent of the king, because it was only the king who had the power to sentence a person to death.

129 By 1951 Belgian authorities in Rwanda carried out investigations showing that already by then there were about 60.000 to 70.000 families (out of a total of about 380.000 families) more than could be adequately fed by the country (Maquet 1961:13).

130 In the 1970's I experienced one such case of transition in Karagwe. A respected *Muhima* helped his *Mwiru* friend, who possessed a lot of cattle, to find a *Mututsi* wife from Rwanda. With the *Mututsi* wife he adopted the cattle culture and became "*hima*-ised" in the Karagwe setting. But the *Muhima* made it clear that his friend would not pass as a "real" *Muhima*, a comment that needs to be considered within the specific Karagwe context.

131 According to Ford and Hall (1945, Appendix V:10) the secondary totem of the *Bahutu-Baitira* in Karagwe is *enfunzi*, 'a small bird'. The Deputy Drumkeeper in Karagwe, Mzee Warwo, said that the *Bahutu* had important priestly functions in Karagwe (Notes from Karagwe II:125, 1991), more specifically, they were responsible for the first fruit rituals at court, *okuganura* (*Kinyanyengoma* Bachorobekwa, BFFM:57, 1991). In Bunyoro the all-important *Abasazima* ritual clan also respects a bird totem: *Enyonza* (H.K. Karubanga's 1948 clan list). The English translation for *e-nyonza* is 'robin-chat' or 'mocking-bird' (Davis 1938/1952:139). In Collins Illustrated Checklist for *Birds of Eastern Africa* (Ber van Perlo 1995: Plate 66, No 21), Archer's Robin-chat, *Cossypha archeri* would correspond to the description indicated by my informants: "L. 15 cm. Note warm rufous-brown colouring, dark face and white eyebrow. Habitat: 1500-4000m. Undergrowth of forests, bamboo and giant heath. Voice: very high '*firra-tweet-twêet-tweet*'.

132 Karagwe: Told by Ta M. Rwemburara, Ahakishaka, 2/2 1976.

133 In Runyankore/Rukiga (Taylor 1959:169) a herd of one hundred, *igana*, brings special prestige to its owner (telephone communication with Katana, Copenhagen, 9/10 1998). Again for the Banyankore, Williams (1938-1939:97) reported that when a *Muhima* obtained exactly 100 for the first time a special ceremony was performed, indicating he had moved to a new status.

134 Karagwe: Mzee Warwo Rwakataguza, BFFM:7, 1989.

135 Credit to McMaster for helping me to reach this conclusion (Uppsala 18/11 2001).

136 The *Banyange* held an extremely important social position among the Barundi. See Amélie Gahama, *La reine mère et ses prêtres au Burundi*, Foreword by Êmile Mworoha (1979:8).

137 Electronic communication with McMaster, 15/11, 2002. Cf. Vansina 2004:46.

138 Acknowledgements to Lodhi for clarification on Johnston's sub-group designations (p.c. in Uppsala, 9/6 2008).

139 Ihangiro: Rev. S. Machumu, BFFN/3:7, 1991.

140 Karagwe: Mzee P. Kapele, BFFN/4:28-29, 1991.

141 These words have stuck in my mind ever since some time in the 1970's when I first heard them from one of the women travelling with us in the car from Ahakishaka, Bushangaro, to the hospital in Nyakahanga, central Karagwe. As I commented on the beauty of the *enyange* we passed, she spontaneously sang the song.

142 I am indebted to Mr Boas Kaitaba, the Culture Officer of Karagwe, who performed the *Enyange* song and explained its context (BFFM:17-20, 1991). For Ihangiro Rev. S. Machumu (BFFN/3:8, 1991) confirmed that "they are still singing the song about *enyange*.

143 Acknowledgements to Mrs Adolphina Kateka, The Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania, Stockholm, for assistance in streamlining the translation (29/6 2002).

144 Informants from Mbarara district (Banyankore) and Rukungiri (Bahororo) agree on this reality. Old *Bahima* would refuse to give their daughters in marriage to *Bairu*, because they regarded a *Mwiru* as *ekyata*, translated 'rascal' in Taylor's Runyankore/Rukiga dictionary (1959:96). So the *Bahima* would say *omwana w'omuntu* about their own people, implying that they were human beings in contrast to the *Bairu*, whom they called *ekyata ky'omwiru*.

145 Karagwe: Ta J. Kakuba insisted that the *Bahima* were "mixed" (BFFN/4:34, 1991). Mzee P. Garobungo (BFFN/6:22, 1991) expressed the same notion for the Banyankore: "*Taliho oruganda elikwetwa Bihima*, 'there is no clan that is called *Bihima*. The *Bahima* were 'cattle

owners', *abatungi b'ente*." *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro (Bunyoro: BFFM:895, 1992) also said that "the *Bahuma* could come from any clan". In his work *Les clans du Rwanda ancien, Elements d'ethnosociologie et d'ethnohistoire* Marcel d'Hertefelt (1971) stressed the multiclass nature of the Rwandan clans.

146 Mzee P. Garobungo, Nkore, said that *Abahinda bakashwera omu Bahima*, 'the *Bahinda* married *Bahima* daughters' (BFFN/6:22, 1992). For Kiziba *Omwana* Amelia Mutahangarwa (BFFM:298, 1991) asserted that the *Omukama* had to marry women from the [aristocratic] "Bahima clan".

147 According to Lodhi "the Bantu root *okumala/mara* means 'complete', but it also has violent connotations: 'to finish, destroy, terminate, exterminate, bring to an end epoch/period or the rule of someone or group'"(p.c. 24/8 2007, Uppsala).

148 Symbolic representations of the Baganda clans are found in the entrance house to the Kasubi Tombs in Kampala. In hierarchical order each ring in the round-thatched roof represents one of the 52 Baganda clans. The top position, the ring woven first of all, is attributed to the Monkey clan.

149 Bunyoro: *Omucwa* A. Rwakaikara, BFFM:858, 1992.

150 The amplicative prefix *ki-* does not only denote seniority, it can also mark feminine gender (information from the linguist Catherine/Kasalina Byangwa Matovu, Makerere University, Dec. 1986). According to Williams (1938:38) the *Bahima* in "Ankole" use the prefix *ki-* to identify a (female) "old cow". This linguistic usage appears to be ancient, originating long before the rise of the *Bahima/Bairu* class distinction. So it is not confined to the *Bahima* of "Ankole". From the general Bantuist context Lodhi interprets *Kintu*'s cow, *Kitare*, as the sacred cow, stating that the prefix *ki-* is a later variant of the amplicative *gi-* meaning 'big, elevated, glorious, sacred, holy' etc (p.c. 24/8 2007).

151 Information from Mr Ronnie Sessanga in telephone communication with London, 28/1 2008.

152 Kiwanuka (1971:193) referred to Stanley (1878:344-381), Felkin (1885-1886:669-770) and R.W. Felkin and C.T. Wilson (1882:197).

153 According to Roscoe (1911:156-157) and Kiwanuka (1971:15-16) the all-important Kiganda ritual office of *Mugema* is associated with the Monkey clan. Just as we have seen for the *Bayangwe* of the Banyankore, the *Mugema* held important duties at installation and other crucial kingship rituals. For Karagwe it has been shown that any prisoner condemned to death by the king could be exonerated, if he managed to dash to the kingship drum, perceived as the *Omuyango* incarnate. In a similar manner, in Buganda, if any one of the king's wives had fallen into disgrace and had been sentenced to death by the king, her life would be spared if she said that she was with child by the *Mugema*. So by virtue of his ritual office the *Mugema* seems to have been entitled to certain rights and privileges. The Buganda case should perhaps be regarded in relation to the fact that the *Kabaka* belongs to the clan of his mother, because there is no specific royal dynastic clan here.

154 Runyoro: *enyondo* (Davis 1938/1952:244), Luganda: *è-`nnyondo* (Snoxall 1967:253), Runyambo: *enyondo* Luhaya: *enyoondo* (Bona-Baisi 1960:145), Runyankore/Rukiga: *enyondo* (Taylor 1959:167) and Kinyarwanda/Kirundi: *inyuundo* (Celis 1989).

155- Information from Mr Sessanga in telephone communication with London, 28/1 2008.

9

Diviners, Kings and *Bacwezi* Spirits

As we pursue the enquiry into the problem of origins of interlacustrine kingship traditions and symbolism the intrinsic meaning of names in the traditions will continue to guide us. According to the precepts that inform the interpretations, this is an exercise that requires comprehensive awareness of the multi-level, anachronistic and retrospective nature attributable to the oral traditions that will be brought up for scrutiny. The main focus of attention is the building of the Bunyoro "centre of creation" and its far-reaching expansionist activities exerting cultural and political influence not only on all the three Great Lakes Bantu successor language groups but also on Central Luo-speakers in Acholi.

Table 5. ***Isimbwa's*** **"decendants"**

First "generation" of *Isimbwa*'s "descendants"			
Isimbwa + *Nyangoma*	'mother of the drum'[1]	~ the *Basingo* clan	= **Mugenyi*
Isimbwa + *Nyinamwiru*	'mother of the commoner'	~ the *Baranzi* clan	= **Ndahura*
Isimbwa + *Kogere*		~ the *Bacwa* clan	= **Mugarra*
Isimbwa + *Nyabiryo*	'the one full of food'[2]	~ (?)	= **Kyomya*
Isimbwa + *Nyakwaya*		~ the *Basiita* clan	= **Mulindwa*
Isimbwa + *Naraga*		~ the *Bacwezi* clan	= **Ibona*

Second "generation" of *Isimbwa*'s "descendants"		
**Mugenyi*	**Ndahura*	**Kyomya*
↓	↓	↓
**Kiro*	**Wamara*	*Nyarwa*, **Kagoro*, *Isingoma Rukidi*, *Kato-Kimera*, *Kiiza*

The *Bacwezi* "Genealogy": *Isimbwa's* "Descendants"

The analysis in the present chapter departs from my interpretation of the *Bacwezi* "genealogy" Buchanan (1974:31) synthesised. The Banyoro court historians record the persona *Isimbwa* as the "son" of the last king of the *Mutembuzi* [*Bagabu*] dynasty in Bunyoro, *Isaza*, and *Nyamata*, 'of milk', hailing from "the Underworld". They introduce "him" as the progenitor of a royal ancestral clan, the *Bacwezi*, to whom they connect themselves as immediate heirs.

In the context of the *Bigo* scenario *Isimbwa*, "the little planting spear", had been interpreted as a retrospective Runyoro device symbolising the mechanism of intermarriage between those who brought new cattle to resident, noble clans in exchange for women. The "first generation" of the *Bacwezi* "genealogy" would mirror that development. But the concept of *Isimbwa* is multi-level. The translation of the name of the first woman given as "wife" to *Isimbwa* indicates that "she" represents kingship. *Nyangoma*, 'mother of the drum', is distinguished by the symbolic trait of twin-ship. "Her" clan is *Basingo*, the cursed clan that may have been responsible for the fall of a *Bacwezi* "dynasty" at *Bigo*, encapsulated in the name *Wamara*, from *ku-mara*, 'to end' or 'finish'.

Asterisks indicate the nine *Bacwezi* venerated as guardian spirits by their respective clans, which are the clans of their "mothers". It is important to note the fundamental role of women. On the socio-economic level the female links with *Isimbwa* mirror a historical process assimilating cattle-owning strangers into Rutara-speaking people's social reality. The persona *Mugenyi*, 'guest', 'visitor', symbolises the perception that the *Bacwezi* were remembered as foreigners. *Isimbwa* could also be a symbol of strangers. *Isimbwa's* union with *Nyinamwiru*, 'the mother of the commoner', is a product of Kinyoro spiritual creativity. "She" emerges as the great spiritual mother connecting the *Babiito* dynasty to the first owners of the soil.

In the "second generation" of the Kinyoro *Bacwezi* "genealogy" the dynastic ideologists in Bunyoro link the *Babiito* "twin brothers", *Isingoma Rukidi* and *Kato Kimera* to *Isimbwa's* "son" *Kyomya*. *Kyomya*

is presented as the "son" of a "woman" whose clan is unknown.[3] The translation of "her" name, *Nyabiryo*, 'the one full of food' indicates that "she" symbolises the fundamental duty of interlacustrine kings to feed their people. *Kyomya* is one of the nine *Bacwezi* spirits, while *Isingoma Rukidi* and *Kato Kimera* are never recorded as ancestor spirits of the *Babiito*. Their role as progenitors of a new dynasty is marked by the distinction of twin-ship.

In "the second generation" of *Isimbwa*'s "descendants" the Banyoro court historians also reproduce *Ndahura* as "father" of *Wamara*. The following exposition will clarify that *Nyinamwiru*'s "son", the persona *Ndahura,* is to be regarded as spirit and spirit only, yet reflecting a specific historical achievement. *Ndahura* became "the first *Mucwezi* of the *Babiito*". The persona *Wamara*, on the other hand, has a twofold role to play. "He" symbolises the end of a "dynasty" at *Bigo*, retrospectively called *Bacwezi*. But "he" also emerges as spirit, in that capacity as "King of Kings", all-important to life and sustenance of both Rutara-speaking kings and their subjects. *Wamara,* from *ku-mara*, 'to finish, complete', is the "last *Mucwezi*" because "he" is said to have "completed the empire that his father *Ndahura* began".

The official standard version of the "Kitara epic"[4] locates the *Bacwezi* in the remote past as builders of a legendary *Kitara* "empire". Kinyoro official records thus depict *Isimbwa* as grandfather of all the *Bacwezi* from whom the *Babiito* derive legitimacy. In retrospect all sources, both clan and court traditions, reverse the historical sequence of *Isimbwa*. The oral, non-official versions presented by consulted Banyoro elders are also conflated. Nevertheless, the details in their stories can reveal glimpses of another reality.

Babiito Origin Traditions

We have seen that Tantala (1989) worked from the premise that cultural models are ideological constructions triggered off by processes of change. The "Kitara epic" is such a cultural process model. To Tantala the *Bacwezi* dynasty depicted in the "Kitara epic" is an ideological construction of the *Babiito* and as such she thought it was an effective charter because the people really believed that the "Cwezi personae" had been the pre-*Babiito* rulers of *Kitara*. Hence Tantala (1989:20)

concluded that the spirits talking through the head of the mediums reflect local early, priestly "nodes of authority". In the present section I intend to demonstrate that it is the diviner in the traditions that decides the destiny of the *Babiito*. Their story can very well be regarded as an ideological construction, but not merely as a "cultural model" as Tantala (1989:31) sees it, rather as a product of state ideology based on "the religious vision of the world". From the perspective of the Bunyoro regional centre of creation, in accordance with the expectations of the people and their leaders, *Bacwezi* kings and spirits merge in the domain of interaction between the visible and the invisible world. The diviner/medium plays the important part of mediator between the two perceptions of reality.

Kinyoro Sources: Non-official and Official

One topic of concern discussed at the 1974 Limuru conference for the historical study of East African Religion dealt with difficulties analysing myths of origin. Martin Schoffeleers, an anthropologist interested in historical aspects of "cults of kingship" in Malawi,[5] made the following observation:

> We know about the beginning–the myths of origin; and we know about the end–the practices of the last centuries. We know nothing about the middle, and it is the middle that matters.[6]

The question is now if the traditions termed myths, because they deal with origins, originated in "the beginning"? If the time of myth transcends the time of history, "the beginning" does not necessarily represent an ideal time of creation before historical time in the sense Eliade saw it. "The beginning" was not always first because according to the expectations of interlacustrine people's vision of the world the Creator is the God of history, perceived to create afresh in the course of historical time. Maybe "the middle" *was* "the beginning"? Or perhaps "the middle" was closer in time than constructed "genealogies" hitherto has made us believe?[7] The key to unlock what really might have happened lies in the way we tackle the problem of a time perspective *relevant* to these specific oral traditions. On closer source critical

scrutiny, following the precepts brought forth and the methods applied for the present study, three levels of time emerge. Those are the recent past, the remote past and the *relevant* past.

All sources, both written and oral, present a retrospective account, the details in the narrative are conflated and refer to events in the remote past at the same time reflecting memories from more recent times. The written, "official" sources are streamlined with the purpose to make the "history" comprehensible to the world of letters, thus reflecting historiography of the recent past. The non-official versions give a less consistent impression. The inconsistencies exposed in the stories told by my informants provide clues to what may have happened in the *relevant* past.[8]

The *Babiito* "Twin Brothers"

While the above reconstructed *Bacwezi* "genealogy" makes *Kyomya* a *Mucwezi* of the second generation, legitimising *Babiito* rule,[9] like Fisher long before (1911/1970:111), *Omucwezikati* Yonia Kabanyoro introduces *Isimbwa*, not *Kyomya*, as "father" of the *Babiito* "twins". *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro:

> When *Isimbwa*, the father of *Ndahura*, went to *Bukidi*, he impregnated a Mukidi girl. Bakidi by tradition hate children born outside marriage.[10] So this girl stayed under a tree.[11] It is where she delivered baby twins, *Isingoma* and *Kato*. *Isingoma* was also called *Mpuga Rukidi* (King of the *Bacwezi*). The *Bacwezi* increased in number in *Bukidi*.[12]

Here *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro introduces "the *Bacwezi* in *Bukidi*". The elders I consulted in Bunyoro and Tooro unanimously agree with Nyakatura (1973:50) that *Bukidi* is located in Luo-speaking peoples' country, more specifically in Lango, currently Apac or Lira districts.[13] The position of the *Bacwezi* in *Bukidi* appears ambiguous and shaky. Not only are *Isimbwa*'s "offspring" presented in terms of children born outside marriage treated as outcasts, "they" are also "twins". As has been demonstrated earlier, interlacustrine cultural values pertaining to twin-ship involve potential dangers but are also regarded as signs of spiritual blessing associated with royalty.

Plate 14. ***Omucwezikati*** **Yonia Kabanyoro (right) is sitting with her daughter Mrs Florence Daido in the characteristic Kinyoro posture. She told the *Bacwezi* epic from an inside perspective**

The first-born "twin", *Isingoma*, 'father of the drum', is given the name *Mpuga*. Nyakatura (1973:61) explained that *Isingoma* was called *Mpuga* because it is said that "he" was multi-coloured. One half of "him" was white indicating "his" *Bacwezi* descent and the other black because of "his" *Bakidi* descent on the side of the mother. *Omubiito* Isaya Karubanga added more details about the alleged double-skinned nature of *Isingoma*, whom the Banyoro know as *Cwa Nyaitondo Rukidi Mpuga*:

> The father of *Cwa Nyaitondo Rukidi Mpuga* was called *Ci Winyi*, who came from Abyssinia. He is said to have come with a child called *Toboromoro*, whom he produced when he was still in Abyssinia. *Cwa Nyaitondo* was born in Lango District. They called him *Nyaitondo* because he was double skinned in colour. Part of his body was black with short hair and the other was white with curled hair.[14]

It appears that the local people in Bunyoro regarded *Isingoma* with suspicion. In that context *Nyaitondo Rukidi Mpuga* was given "his"

nickname *Cwa*. *Omubiito* I. Karubanga clarified the Kinyoro origin of the name:

> The indigenous people in Bunyoro never liked *Isingoma* because he was a foreigner, so wherever he passed they wanted to kill him. But he used to escape from them and the people used to ask themselves: 'How can he escape from us?' So he used to escape from them. In that manner he was nicknamed *Cwa*, which means 'to escape'.[15]

Although we cannot dismiss *Omubiito* I. Karubanga's statement that the *Babiito* were foreigners passing through *Bukidi*,[16] the above reference to skin-colour linked to a presumed origin in "Abyssinia" appears as an explanation reflecting the racist ideology that the colonialists projected on the populations they ruled. The cause for the alleged double nature of *Rukidi Mpuga* or *Nyaitondo* should in the first place be sought from evidence derived from within the cultural context of the peoples concerned, not from colonial constructions of a presumed "Hamitic" origin.

Southall (1971) studied symbolic expressions of duality and twin-ship in cultural borderlands of interaction between Bantu- and Luo-speakers in Northern Uganda. He found widespread, recorded incidence of twin-birth mythology as a symbolic representation of the unity and difference of human and animal nature among Western Nilotic-speakers (1971:390). A twin himself, *Rukidi Mpuga* appears in the origin tradition quoted as "double skinned in colour". In my view it is probable that the name *Mpuga* derives from the Runyoro verb *-huga*, 'to be crooked, awry' (Davis 1938/1952:45), perhaps indicating that there was something seriously unusual about "his" birth. Although he was worried about the difference in vowel length, Schoenbrun (1993b:49) proposed that *Rukidi*'s *Mpuga* name could be a reference to a North Rutaran cattle colour term after about 1450, **-puuga*, "an animal that is splotched with a mixture of black and white". The date for the inception of the above-mentioned cattle term would coincide with Webster's (1979a:34) posited 1436-1463 date for *Rukidi*. Webster's chronology was constructed to fit into the traditional perception that the *Bacwezi* was a parent dynasty of the *Babiito* in the remote past. In the following exposition, I will

demonstrate that the inconsistencies contained in the non-official sources reveal a different time perspective.

As the story unfolds we will see that there are two distinct groups of *Bacwezi*, those in *Wamara*'s kingdom who were about to leave and those in *Bukidi* who were preparing to come. According to the logic of the standard regional version the persona *Ndahura*, the "first *Mucwezi*" and "son" of *Isimbwa*, figures among the *Bacwezi* of *Wamara*'s kingdom. In the official standard version the persona *Wamara* is the "the last *Mucwezi*", believed to have "finished" or completed the building of the "empire" "his father" *Ndahura* is said to have begun in the remote past (cf. Oberg 1940/1970:123).

> The standard regional *Bacwezi* dynastic genealogy:
> *Ndahura*, the first *Mucwezi Omukama* and expansionist
> *Mulindwa*, the care taker or protector
> *Wamara*, son of *Ndahura* and the last *Mucwezi Omukama*

In the course of the present chapter I intend to show that in reality the persona *Ndahura* mirrors *Babiito* activities in the relevant past.

Diviners from *Bukidi, Nyakooka* and *Karongo*

Omucwezikati Y. Kabanyoro continues her story:

> In *Bukidi* there was a certain diviner who originated from the *Basuuli* clan. He had a friend among the *Bacwezi* (*Ndahura*). Whenever he came to Bunyoro he would stay with his friend.[17]

By alluding to the friendship between *Ndahura* and the diviner in *Bukidi* the storyteller prepares her listeners for the next step in the exposition. The overall purpose of the tradition is no doubt to safeguard *Bacwezi* legitimacy for the *Babiito*.

> One day the *Bacwezi* went to seek advice from a traditional doctor but he found their cow with no intestines in the abdomen. The *Bacwezi* were very surprised. All the diviners said they had never seen such a thing, but the *Bacwezi* wanted to know what it meant.[18]

Nyakatura described the misfortunes of the *Bacwezi* [in *Wamara*'s kingdom]. When local diviners failed to produce any clear augury, the *Bacwezi* decided to consult diviners from *Bukidi* (1973:38-41). It appears that only in *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro's version *Ndahura* is described as the persona who knew whom to contact:

> The *Bacwezi* called *Nyakooka* from *Bukidi*, who was a friend of *Ndahura*. They told him, "We have brought a cow to an *omufumu*, but we have found no intestines in it." Then he asked for an axe and started cutting the cow's head and he found the intestines in the head. Then he told them: "Oh, you are going, all your things are packed and are on your heads, you are no longer here." Then all the traditional doctors who were there said the same. All the *Bacwezi* said: "Who will stay in *Wamara*'s kingdom?"
>
> They all went to *Wamara* and told him they wanted to go. *Wamara* also decided to go, for he could not stay behind alone. Also his aunt, Nyakaranda Kaisimbwa,[19] decided to go away without understanding that *Nyakooka* wanted to bring in the *Bacwezi* from his own area *Bukidi*.[20]

Nyakatura (1973) explained that there were two diviners of the *Basuuli* clan from *Bukidi*, "the brothers of *Nyakooka* and *Karongo*". They had "found themselves in *Wamara*'s palace while in pursuit of an eagle which had snatched away their cock which they used in the practice of their profession" (1973:38). The name *Nyakooka* must be an allusion to the *enkoko*, 'fowl', or *enkorantima*, 'cock' (Davis 1938/1932:128) that was said to have brought them. "It would seem that their compulsive pursuit of the eagle was in obedience to a force beyond their control", an explanation apparently used to obscure the fact that "they had come to prepare the way for the coming of the *Babiito*" (Nyakatura 1973:39). Thus *Nyakooka* is depicted as the diviner called by a name alluding to divination skills. But we shall soon see that it was *Karongo*, 'the second twin',[21] who really was important. *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro continues:

> Before they went away, they talked with the diviner *Nyakooka*, as they despised the *Bacwezi* in *Bukidi*. "Will those slaves, sons of the *Bakidi*, manage kingship matters, will they hunt, put on *Biganja* pair of shoes? Will *Empango* drum sound and will it sound on the *Kaswa*, will they wear a crown ...?"[22]

Here it is evident that *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro talks about two different categories of *Bacwezi*, those who prepared themselves to leave and those who were coming in from *Bukidi*. Asserting *Bacwezi* legitimacy for the *Babiito* the quoted informant reassures the listeners that "the *Babiito* were produced under a tree called *Biito*, but they are *Bacwezi*".[23] By calling them slaves, *bairu*, the *Munyoro* spokeswoman retrospectively voices her people's social stratification prejudices despising the *Bacwezi* in *Bukidi*. Her concern was how the *Bacwezi* in *Bukidi* would manage the ritual role of kingship (Nyakatura 1973:66). Yet the *Empango* drum rituals the Banyoro perform on the *Kaswa*, 'raised ground', mentioned by Y. Kabanyoro, must be a local product of the Luo/Bantu borderland culture, because they are practised in the *Babiito* kingdoms of Bunyoro and Tooro exclusively.[24]

> As they were speaking all this, an uncle of the *Bacwezi* in *Bukidi* was in a nearby bush hearing them. *Kagoro* suspected the man. They all went there and found him there. The man ran away saying what he had heard. As he continued to speak, they speared him and he died on the spot.[25]

Kagoro, the fighter, always seems to have been prepared to defend the case of the *Bacwezi*. Here against "the *Bacwezi* in Bukidi", who represent the incoming *Babiito*.

> Then all the *Bacwezi* departed. They took the route via Bugoma,[26] even their footprints are still there where they had a stop over. Even the nods where their dogs were tied are still there ...[27]

Traditions told among Rutara-speaking peoples abound with local allusions to physical imprints in the environment attributed to perceived *Bacwezi* presence, which may refer to the activities of royal mothers (Katoke 1975:47), priests (Babiiha 1958:124) or spirits (below), to mention but a few.

> When they reached Butuku (Tooro), their fellow *Mucwezi Kyomya*'s cow had labour pains. *Kyomya* stayed with the cow, the *Bacwezi* urged him to go and leave the cow but he refused and stayed behind looking after his delivering cow. The rest went away and he was nicknamed *Kyomya Rumera*, who produced all the *Bacwezi* who remained on earth.[28]

The prime concern for cattle prompted "their fellow *Mucwezi*" *Kyomya* to stay behind. "His" "nickname" *Rumera* is derived from the verb *ku-mera*, which means 'to grow' (Davis 1938/1952:94), the prefix *ru-* denotes power. I suggest that *Rumera* is a name alluding to the very institution of interlacustrine kingship that stands as the warrant for life and fertility. In "his" capacity as the *Bacwezi* link to "all the *Bacwezi* who remained on earth", the persona *Kyomya Rumera* emerges as the *Mucwezi* ancestor legitimising the *Babiito*.[29]

> Later *Nyakooka* came back and found all the kings gone. He went and called *Isingoma*, *Kato* and *Nyarwa*. That was their secret, *Nyakooka* and *Isingoma*. He went and persuaded them to come. He told *Isingoma* that they (the *Bacwezi*) had all gone.[30]

To the people living between the lakes it would be quite natural to perceive that the diviner controls the situation, because they would not draw any definite boundaries between the immaterial and the material world. The "secret" alludes to legitimacy. Lacking blood relationships to the royal houses in the region, the *Babiito* had to secure other, spiritual, means of legitimacy.

> The mother of *Rukidi* was *Nyatwooro*. *Isingoma* told his mother and brother *Kato* to go with him. They asked him, "Where are we going?" They packed their things and started going. They passed near Lake Kyoga in Chope[31] on Bukidi route.
>
> When they reached the lake, they looked for a route but in vain. Then *Isingoma* started abusing *Nyakooka* of having brought them to die. "Now you see, where do we pass? There is water everywhere." *Nyakooka* told him to swear that he is a pure *Mucwezi*, not a half-caste. Then *Isingoma* swore saying, "If I am your child, not a half-caste, let this lake divide itself." The lake divided and they passed through.

The fate of the *Babiito* is laid in the hands of the *Musuuli* diviner *Nyakooka*, who here plays the role of mediator between the visible and the invisible world, securing legitimacy as "pure" *Bacwezi* for the *Babiito*. If *Isingoma* really was a *Mucwezi*, the lake had to divide itself, because legitimate kings of kingdoms between the lakes were believed to master the powers of water.

> The following people came from Bukidi: *Isingoma*, *Kato*, his mother and many other people.[32]

Considered within the general context of the sources presented in this chapter *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro's short note about *Rukidi*'s entourage of many people gives the impression of an occupying force, most probably taking power by armed struggle.

***Karongo*, 'The Second Twin'**

In the quoted oral source as well as in written sources (for example K.W. 1936:296) *Nyakooka* figures as the diviner who brought the first *Babiito*. Nyakatura (1970:97) mentions *Nyakooka*, as "the diviner, who prophesied that Rukidi would become king and it came true" and that "he was succeeded by Karongo". There is tangible evidence to show that the *Musuuli* diviner entitled *Karongo*, 'the second twin', is perceived as the actor here, because his heir keeps the stick, *Omukoro* that is said to have struck the water for the first *Babiito* to pass.[33] Mzee *Karongo Omukonda* showed me the stick the bent part of which he said had been cut off, when his ancestor hit the water. The crucial role attributed to *Karongo Omukonda* of the *Basuuli* clan is perpetuated in the hereditary ritual office responsible for handing the broken stick nine times to the new *Omukama* at accession[34] as well as at the *Mpango* drum rituals celebrated in memory of the king's installation.[35] *Omukoro*, the name of the stick, is the Runyoro term used for the very ritual of royal installation: *Omukoro gw'Okujweka*.[36] *Karongo Omukonda* said that it was his responsibility to perform the ritual of handing the king the *Omukoro* because it was his ancestor, the *Omusuuli*, who had identified the vacant throne, brought the *Babiito* and given them power to rule Bunyoro. Hence the purpose of the ritual was to reinforce power to the *Babiito* dynasty.[37] Moreover, in Bunyoro and Tooro the very name for the crown used by kings and certain "chiefs" alike is *e-kondo* (Davis 1938/1952:82); *Abajwara-kondo*, 'Crown wearers' are known as the king's chief advisors. The shared linguistic root and semantic field enhances the importance of the title-holder *Karongo Omu-konda*.

However, in the above quoted source, Nyakatura explained the presence of the diviner *Nyakooka* by asserting that *Karongo*, 'the second twin', succeeded "him". The role of *Nyakooka* seems to have been basically prophetic. To account for the coming of the *Babiito* in the remote past they had to push back *Nyakooka*'s emergence on the scene to fit into the general official picture. It seems reasonable to suggest that the relevant date for *Karongo Omukonda* should be placed in a later period in history, when Buganda was advancing into Bunyoro territories and the Banyoro needed to "reinforce" their position.[38] *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro:

> After a period of rule *Isingoma* said, "To Buganda I will send *Kato Kimera*, my brother. If he is rooted there no danger will come from there."[39]

Plate 15. **Prepared for the installation of *Omukama* Solomon Gafabusa Iguru I Amooti of Bunyoro, 11/6/ 1994: the Babiito incumbent diviners *Nyakooka*, holding a cock, and *Karongo Omukonda*, holding the stick of his forefathers. (Photo: Mr John Peter Busomoke)**

Interlacustrine cultural values command great respect towards twins, who were believed to remain together even beyond death. The alleged twin relationship between the first *Babiito* can perhaps be interpreted as a symbolic way of neutralising and bringing peace in a situation of strained Bunyoro-Buganda relations. *Omumwoolikati* Eseeza Mpirima, who had spent much time at the palace because of the hereditary ritual functions of her clan, the *Bamooli*, summarised succinctly how the *Babiito* were perceived to have come to rule Bunyoro. She makes herself mouthpiece of *Isingoma*'s younger twin brother *Kato Kimera*, who is said to have broken away from Bunyoro. She also clarifies the role of *Kiiza*, namesake of a child that is born after twins:

> Before the *Bacwezi* left they sent for the *Babiito*, who were *Kyomya*'s children in Lango (Bukidi) to come and take over the throne. After the departure of the *Bacwezi*, *Mpuga* [*Isingoma*] became the king of Bunyoro. Then *Kimera* went to Buganda and became king as he said, "I am rooted here like a bark cloth tree, *omutoma*, so I will not go back". *Kiiza*, who was the youngest, went to Tooro and became king. [*Kato*] *Kimera* and *Kiiza* rebelled and broke away from Bunyoro.[40]

Kimera is the name for *Kato* that connects "him" to the *Mucwezi Kyomya Rumera*. The perception of the *omutoma* bark cloth tree that grows, *ku-mera*, and does not dry up, *ku-t-oma*, is enshrined in the name with which they praised *Kyomya*. We have seen that *Omucwezikati* Kabanyoro identified "him" as the ancestor to "all the *Bacwezi* who remained on earth". In earlier research the persona *Kimera* has been interpreted as "the hero of a perpetually repeated ritual drama which symbolized, and was designed to ensure, the perpetual recurrence of life" (Wrigley 1959:40). The origin of *Kimera* should not be sought in any presumed archetype of "perpetual recurrence of life", but rather in the specific material and immaterial context of interlacustrine kingship. Voiced by the Banyoro, the persona *Kimera* is a symbol of life and fertility. It alludes to the fundamental role Rutara-speaking people attach to the very institution of kingship. It follows that the concept of *Bacwezi* represents kingship.

The presentation of "*Kyomya*'s children" in terms of human reproduction is conflated into one "family", accounting for a process

of Bunyoro history probably evolving over a shorter period than the one officially recognised. The local version here explaining the role of *Kiiza* can symbolise the historical part played by *Omukama* Kaboyo I, who broke away from Bunyoro to form his own kingdom in Tooro around 1830.[41] In Nyakatura's (1973:64) version *Rukidi* is said to have divided *Kitara* among "his" brothers, Busoga given to the youngest, *Kiiza*. A product edited to fit the demands of the recent past Nyakatura's written account makes anachronistic use of a name for a "kingdom", Busoga, which did not exist until the British created it. So the written court traditions here reflect notions current to a situation in the recent past when at the same time it refers to events perceived to have taken place in the remote past. This is the time of a glorious *Kitara* "Empire", built by a perceived *Bacwezi* "dynasty", to which the *Babiito* connect themselves for legitimacy.

The problem with the standard regional version is that the *Bacwezi* are understood as the name of a specific human dynasty that reigned in the remote past, subsequently resurrecting as identifiable spirits of those very kings, also named *Bacwezi*. If the concept of *Bacwezi* here represents kingship generally, then it makes sense to accept the message that comes out from *Omucwezikati* Kabanyoro's story: There were two groups of *Bacwezi*; those of *Wamara*'s kingdom who prepared themselves to leave and those in *Bukidi* who represent the incoming *Babiito*. It is with "the *Bacwezi* in *Bukidi*" that Luo-speaking elders in Pajule claim a common ancestry.

Luo Historiography

Elders I interviewed in Acholi said that the name *Bacwezi* is a changed (bantunised) pronunciation of the *P'Cwaa* or *Pacwaa* clan.[42] My preliminary fieldwork research results appeared to confirm Crazzolara's contention that the *Pacwaa* clan members claim common ancestry with the *Bacwezi* (Crazzolara 1937:12-13, Farelius 1996:27). On closer scrutiny of available sources this conclusion cannot be accepted without considerable modifications. Wrigley (1981:234) opined that "glosses and guesses of travelled and literate informants" have confused the general picture of Luo historiography.[43] The new information presented

here from the Bunyoro scene, but within the regional perspective, may shed some light on the problem. We are not concerned with the ultimate origin of the *Babiito*, because it goes beyond the scope of the present study.

The previous exposition of local Bunyoro sources has shown that the elders consulted unanimously state *Bukidi* in the present Lira or Apac Districts to be the location from where the *Babiito* migrated into what is now Bunyoro. *Omubiito* Karubanga insisted that the *Babiito* were foreigners passing through *Bukidi*:

> The *Ababiito* settled in Lango (Bukidi) but the Langis never liked them for they were foreigners. So they wanted to kill them as they were always asking themselves about the origin of those people. The *Ababiito* found out that the Langis were not good people to stay with. Hence they migrated from Lango towards the western side of Uganda.[44]

If the *Babiito* migrated into Bunyoro from *Bukidi* they must have arrived from the east and not from the north. Onyango-ku-Odongo and Webster (1976:7), on the other hand, had accepted the existence of a northern presumed early Luo settlement and dispersal centre called Tekidi 'under the mountain', somewhere at the foot of the impressive Agoro ranges along the border between the modern nations of Uganda and Sudan.[45] Onyango-ku-Odongo developed his thesis that *Rukidi* was the son of a certain ruler of Tekidi (Owiny I, 1409-1436) and the "light-skinned" *Latworo*. *Rukidi* is said to have "left Tekidi, crossed the Nile ... and moved south" into Bunyoro, "where he established his rule" (1976:8).

But in Nyakatura's version *Nyatworo* (*Latworo*) is "black". He (1973:51) noted that the mother of the *Babiito* twin brothers was *Nyatworo*, whose father was said to be *Labongo* of the *Bakwonga* clan and bushbuck totem, and allegedly it is from her that the *Babiito* adopted the *engabi*, bushbuck totem. Nyakatura (1973:61) believed *Rukidi*'s "black" side was derived from "his" mother *Nyatworo*. Yet, in a footnote, Onyango-ku-Odongo and Webster (1976:8) referred to Nyakatura's statement that "Rukidi's mother belonged to the Bakwonga, a Bahuma clan in Bunyoro".[46] Luo traditions equate the *Jo Oma* with the *Bahuma* or *Bahima* (Webster and Herring 1975:99).

Onyango's grandmother[47] described how the *Jo Oma* people came wandering into Lukwor settlement of Tekidi during the reign of *Rwot* (King) *Chua Mera*, estimated by Webster (1979a:31) to be around 1463-1490:

> They were very strange people with long necks, sharp noses and light skin. The males were invariably tall and slender. [...] By contrast, their women were very heavy and slow in movement. [...] The women would smear themselves with ghee or butter to such an excess that they could be smelt from afar. [...] It was not only the men and women who looked strange to the people of Tekidi, but also their cattle. This was because all the cattle were of the same colour. They were all brown and their horns were very long and looked like elephant tusks. The bulls were unusually big. Another queer thing was that these strange looking people lived on meat and milk only. [...] The men were physically feeble and, unlike the Lwo people, were not good fighters. They came [...] from the direction of the present Ethiopia (Onyango-ku-Odongo 1976:89).

This quote appears as a reference to much later times, because Onyango-ku-Odongo (1976:94) goes on to claim that the Luduni or Banyoro people that the *Jo Cuji* descendants of the *Jo Oma* easily conquered were weak because of jiggers, a disease that was not known until the nineteenth century.[48] Moreover, as we shall see, to judge them as "physically feeble and, unlike the Luo, no good fighters" is not correct. Such a statement must derive from the observable post-colonial atmosphere of instability triggered by the dynamic interaction between religious and political institutions and ethnicity (Mudoola 1993/1996).[49] These versatile *Jo Oma* people, who carry the same characteristics as the *Bahima*, allegedly learnt everything connected to royal ceremonies respecting the *Rwot Chua Mera* of Lukwor (Onyango-ku-Odongo 1976:90-95).

In the source above *Kyomya Rumera* was mentioned as the link to all the *Bacwezi* remaining on earth, *Isingoma Rukidi* in the Bunyoro centre and *Kato Kimera* in Buganda. Therefore, the name "*Chua Mera*", also would appear to originate in the Bunyoro "centre of creation". So does the name *Chua/Cwa*, in *Omubiito* Karubanga's statement above apply to the first *Mubiito Rukidi* as a name given in Bunyoro. From Luo-

speaking people's perspective it denotes a reference to a Nilotic ancestor (cf. Wright 1952:85). But I have failed to find any explanation for the meaning of *Cwa* in the Luo sources consulted.[50] Again, the origin of the name *Cwa* should be looked for in the context of Bantu-speakers in the Bantu/Luo borderland area.

Plate 16. Mzee Paulo Ochaya, Kitgum, explains the connection between Bunyoro and the Kitgum *Cwaa* people

The hypothesis of an early Luo settlement in Tekidi can be disproved. Onyango-ku-Odongo and Webster's (1976:8) assumption that *Nyatworo* belonged to a *Bahuma* clan in Bunyoro is also problematic for several reasons. Firstly, it does not only contradict Nyakatura's (1973:51) assessment that *Nyatworo* was supposed to have been "black". It also goes against observed socio-economic composition of clans among Rutara- and West Highland-speaking communities, which are usually mixed. Only among the Banyankore do we find certain sub-clans of the *Beene* category that are claimed to be *Bahima* exclusively. But if we take the specific *Bahuma* clan reference to mean a reference to an aristocratic clan (Webster and Herring 1975:99) rather than a clan whose members were specialised cattle raisers only, then the issue of so-called *Bahuma* in Bunyoro would make better sense. We have seen that the *Batundu*

in Kiziba, who were close to the king, were said to have been *Bahima*, although they were connected to iron-working and were not specialised in cattle keeping. A high-ranking member of the *Babiito* dynasty in Kiziba said that the king had a ritual wife, *Mukangoma*, who had to be of a "*Bahima* clan", for example the *Batundu*.[51] Just as the *Batundu* must be regarded as the name of a local clan supporting the *Babiito* dynasty in Kiziba, the *Bahuma* identification of the *Bakwonga* in Bunyoro can be a reference to an "aristocratic", but local, clan supporting the *Babiito* (Webster and Herring 1975:98-99)[52].

Nyatworo became the prototype of a ritual office held by the *Bakwonga* clan, the wife of the king, *Omugo w'Omukama*, who stayed at the burial house of the king, *egasani*. On the occasion of the new moon it was her duty to perform fertility rituals of *okwotera*, i.e. smoke her body.[53] The *Bakwonga* connection to the *okwotera* rituals argues for Central Sudanic origins. Material culture exposed in Bunyoro kingship rituals where the *Bakwonga* are involved, suggests that these ritual practices associated with the clan would originate in the "Central Sudanic substratum" (cf. Wrigley 1981:221 and Tantala 1989:105) of the Bantu/Luo borderlands. The same cultural source would be valid for the *Basuuli* diviners *Nyakooka* and *Karongo*, who in Bunyoro traditions decide the destiny of the *Babiito*. Also the *Bamooli* clan mentioned above could belong in the same group of clans that supported the *Babiito* (Webster and Herring 1975:99). *Omumwolikati* E. Mpirima said that *Bamooli* clan members were the best blacksmiths of the *Babiito*. They made the "sword" *mpirima* (*ekitara*), which the kings used at war.[54] So the *Bakwonga* in Bunyoro could be termed *Bahuma* and "aristocratic" because they were close to the *Babiito* dynasty. Nevertheless, the presence of *Jo Oma/Bahuma/Bahima* specialised cattle keepers in the region could be proposed by the persona *Isimbwa*.

Ndahura, 'The First *Mucwezi*"

According to the *Bacwezi* "genealogy" the *Babiito* court historians depict *Isimbwa* as their *Bacwezi* "grandfather". The persona *Isimbwa*, "the little planting-spear" is a figure that transcends the boundaries between the invisible and the visible world.

Nyinamwiru: Prototype of *Nyina Omukama*, 'Mother of the Head Milker'

Traditions have it that when *Isaza*, the king on earth, went to the Underworld, the *omukumurizi*, 'gatekeeper' (Beattie 1971:45) *Bukuku* of the *Baranzi* clan (Nyakatura 1974:15) is said to have taken over the throne.[55] But he was a relative of *Kairu*, prototype of the *Bairu*, 'serfs' in Kinyoro and Kinyankore Milk Test traditions. Allegedly, that is why some of his *saza* chiefs rejected him: *Titurukuramya omwiru*, 'we cannot pay homage to a commoner', they said (cf. Nyakatura 1947:27, 1973:16 and Tantala 1989:553).[56] As we shall see, however, the appearance of the persona *Bukuku* of the *Baranzi* clan and the story about *Bukuku*'s "daughter", who provides a new, "legitimate", heir to the throne of *Kitara*, appears to be a product of Kinyoro spiritual creativity. Father Charles Nkende in Hoima said that the mother of *Ndahura*, *Nyinamwiru*, was a *Nyakatagara*, a household medium.[57] But in the final analysis of the sources presented the persona *Nyinamwiru* enters the interlacustrine scene as an altogether spiritual creation, who miraculously gives birth to "the first *Mucwezi*" *Ndahura*.

In Fisher's (1911/1970:84) version *Bukuku*'s "daughter" *Nyinamwiru* was born with only one eye and one ear. The diviners "he" consulted warned "him" to guard "her" very carefully to prevent "her" marrying, for if ever "she" should give birth to a "son", "he" would rise up and kill "him". Nyakatura (1973:16) had *Bukuku* incapacitate *Nyinamwiru* by cutting off one of "her" breasts and gouging out one of "her" eyes:

> By so doing he was convinced she would not attract the attention of men. He then built her a separate palace without any entrance to it. He gave her a maid called *Mugizi* to serve her and look after her needs.

Mugizi belongs in the immaterial world, because "she" bears the name of a female spirit that would possess women mediums (Nyakatura 1970:63). Spirits are particularly associated with the Underworld, *Okuzimu* (Beattie 1964:127). The *Babiito* may record the persona *Isimbwa* as the progenitor of the *Bacwezi*, but "he" is never known as a *Mucwezi* spirit possessing any medium. Nevertheless *Omupanyarwa* E.W. Rubaale, an elder in Tooro, related that:

> *Isimbwa* ascended from the Underworld and with his two dogs went on a hunting expedition to the maid, to whom he made inquiries about her mistress' health.[58]

Despite all precautions, *Isimbwa*, "the little planting spear" was bound to find the way to *Nyinamwiru*'s hidden abode. *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro:

> One day a man appeared at the palace and sent [a letter] things[59] to *Nyinamwiru*, the daughter of *Bukuku*, who was the king. The maid took it to her mistress and told her that a man has sent these things [these were regarded as a love letter] to you. When *Nyinamwiru* saw them she asked herself, "Where will that man pass?" Then she ordered the servants to construct a ladder and put it behind the palace. Then the man climbed into the palace and stayed there for a number of days and then went away.
>
> From there he went to Bukidi, he left *Nyinamwiru* pregnant. Later on *Nyinamwiru* gave birth to a baby boy. When her father heard the news, he said, "Oh, women are terrible! How did she get the baby?"[60]

The Tooro elder explained the name of the child. His interpretation should be regarded rather as legend or folklore[61] than revealing any plausible historical reality behind the persona *Ndahura*:

> The child had been named *Ndahura* by his grandfather meaning *Yamurahura nkaha*? This means 'how on earth did she get pregnant?' or 'how did she manage to get the child?'[62]

The name *Ndahura* means 'I will raid cattle'. It is derived from the Runyoro verb *-huura*, 'raid cattle' (Davis 1938/1952:46) and as we shall soon see, it is a name befitting the specific historical achievement that "he" symbolises. As *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro's story proceeds, new details give us hints about *Ndahura*'s fundamental significance in the building of the *Babiito* "centre of creation":

> *Bukuku* then ordered the servants to throw the child in a river.[63] When the child was thrown, its leg clang on a tree called *omubimba*. Then Nyinamwiru's servant *Rubumbi*, who made *emindi*,[64] *ebisahi*,[65] and other milk containers, heard the child crying. He thought the child could be his mistress' thrown-away child. He went there and saw the child and took it to his house. His wife had a baby and he told her to breastfeed both children. Later on *Rubumbi* went to his mistress and told her he had found the child and taken it home. Her mistress replied, "Have you seen it? Go and collect it". *Rubumbi* replied that he had already taken the baby home. Then he was told to bring offerings the next day and be given cows.
>
> This was an open secret, *Nyinamwiru* wanted to give cows to the servant *Rubumbi* to feed the child.
> The child was called *Karubumbi* meaning 'the child of the potter'.[66]

Ndahura allegedly rose to power from humble origins. A potter raised him, a detail symbolising *Ndahura*'s role in the new creation.

> When the child grew up, he started looking after *Rubumbi*'s cattle with *Bukuku*'s herdsmen (*abahuma*). But whenever *Bukuku*'s herdsmen were giving salty water in the boat to their cattle, *Karubumbi* would come and chase them away and bring *Rubumbi*'s cattle to take the salty water.[67]

When *Bukuku*'s herdsmen had gone to their master to report about the inappropriate behaviour of *Rubumbi*'s (the potter) son, Kinyoro non-official information given by *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro, an 89 year-old lady, seemingly unaffected by the written sources, complements the picture with the following remark:

> *Rubumbi*'s child is very stubborn but he resembles the *Bacwezi*. Oh, the *Bacwezi* went away, they died, how do you mention that they will ever come back?[68]

This statement testifies to the perception that *Ndahura* to the Banyoro represented the return of the *Bacwezi*. In a similar manner, when the first Europeans arrived, the local people had believed that they were the *Bacwezi* who had come back to reclaim their lost throne.[69]

> Even the next day the herdsmen went and reported. Then *Bukuku* said, "Tomorrow you will take me there, I will beat him", but the boy had a very sharp stick. The following day they went with the king and his throne, *ekitebe*, to where they used to give the cattle water. On reaching there they found a nice place and put there the throne, where the king sat.
> The cattle were brought and given salty water. As usual the boy heard them, came and chased away their cattle. The herdsmen told *Bukuku*, and *Bukuku* stood up seriously and told the herdsmen to get hold of the boy for him. While *Bukuku* was still standing there, the boy came and killed him with his stick.

The meaning of the name *Bukuku* could be derived from the Runyoro verb *kukuuka*, 'come from water cattle' (Davies 1938/1952:83). The purpose of "his" role in the *Bacwezi* drama is enshrined in that name, because "he" was destined to die while watering the cattle.

> The herdsmen went and told *Bukuku*'s daughter *Nyinamwiru* to come and kill the offender. When *Nyinamwiru* heard the news she replied in amazement, "Make an enclosure, *ekikali*, my ears have made me hear the bad and the good, *amatu gampuliize ebibi nebirungi*, my son *Bwerahwire*, 'The light has come back', has killed *Bukuku*.[70]

When *Rubumbi*'s protégé had slain *Bukuku*, *Nyinamwiru* praised her son as *Bwerawhire*, 'the light has come back'.[71] This is another testimony arguing for an interpretation that considers *Ndahura* as the *Bacwezi* returned. Now everyone rejoiced that *Kitara*'s royal line had been restored (Beattie 1971:47). *Ndahura* symbolises the renewed kingship, the light that had come back. The light most probably alludes to the light of the new moon, *Okwezi*, because the new moon is percieved as the symbol of the king, a belief demonstrated from the context of the old kingdoms of Karagwe and Nkore.

> Make an enclosure, the child has taken over the throne, *ekitebe*, he is the king, *aliire obukama*, 'he has eaten kingship'! He was called *Karubumbi*,

> 'of the Potter', from now on he will be called *Ndahura*." Henceforth she became the mother of the king, *Nyina Omukama*.[72]

"This is how *Ndahura* became the first king of the *Bacwezi*".[73] Here *Nyinamwiru* emerges as the prototype of *Nyina Omukama*, 'Mother of the Head Milker'. Milk Test traditions accounted for in Chapter Eight are proof of *Babiito* origin of the royal title *Omukama*, 'the Head Milker'. It is my contention that the *Babiito* formulated the concept of *Bacwezi*; from their perspective *Ndahura* is the first *Bacwezi Omukama* of *Kitara*.

Much as the Banyoro originally despised the *Babiito*, to the Luo-speaking Acholi, *Bito* has negative connotations.[74] On the other hand, the meaning of the name *Kitara* represents success.[75] An elder of the *Pacwaa* clan, who explained what it means to the Luo in general and to his clan specifically, voiced the Luo interpretation of *Kitara*:

> When a person is despised at home or in a society, he or she later gives the name *Kitara* to his or her child, whom he/she believes would bring forth *light*, *happiness* and *recognition* to the one who was formerly despised or ignored.[76]

That recognition, to the Banyoro, was won by the sword, *Kitara* (Davis 1938/1952:79). The very name *Kitara* has acquired its regional fame from the *Babiito* expansions.[77] An important Munyoro traditional expert said that the land of the Bunyoro kingdom was won by the use of the sword *Ekitara*.[78]

Ndahura: Religious Adaptation of *Cwamali*

The *Mucwezi* persona that coincides with aggression is *Ndahura*. The sources available demonstrate how *Ndahura*'s belligerent nature and characteristics of his life are cast in the mould of the military activities of the *Babiito*. Oral traditions from Tooro insist that *Ndahura* did not remain in "his capital" *Mubende* but travelled widely, reaching "Tanzania, Rwanda, Boga and Congo".[79] *Ndahura*'s peripatetic nature could be a retrospective projection of *Babiito* military campaigns, which were infamous in the region. The reality behind *Ndahura*'s scaring spiritual manifestation can be surmised from a tradition I recorded in Bunyoro:

> After a period of *Bacwezi* rule, *Ndahura* and his soldiers, *Abarusura*, went to fight the Bahaya in Tanzania. But they caught small pox there, so they were defeated and had to stay there.[80]

The reference to smallpox that would have befallen *Ndahura*'s soldiers is anachronistic, because that epidemic is known to have followed the outbreak of rinderpest during the last decade of the nineteenth century (Ford and Hall 1947:21). So the quoted Kinyoro tradition apparently connects a recorded instance of smallpox in the recent past with the name of a perceived *Mucwezi* expansionist and conqueror, whose activities are placed in the remote past. There is no doubt that traditions about *Ndahura* are conflated. But the point is that the fearsome nature of *Ndahura* is expressed by the *Mucwezi* spirit of small pox (Berger 1973:87). Seven huts were built for the use of *Ndahura*'s spirit at "his" *Mubende* shrine (Berger 1973:87), a detail that argues for *Ndahura*'s ill-omened image. Seven is the interlacustrine inauspicious number.

The persona *Ndahura* can be a religious adaptation of the *Mubiito* warrior king *Cwamali*. Traditions about the *Mucwezi Ndahura*'s purported bravery in battle and cattle-raiding are specifically reflected in the history about the 10th *Omukama* in the *Babiito* dynastic list, *Cwamali I* or *Cwa*. *Ndahura* even shares with *Omukama Cwamali* the honorific title most probably referring to military raids against many nationalities, *Rumoma Mahanga*.[81] *Cwa* was also praised as "the true *Chwa* (cutter), the scourge of the cows of Nkore" (Nyakatura 1973:72). Petero Bikunya (1927:63) noted that *Cwamali* received his name because of his raids on Nkore.[82] The following details given by *Mupanyarwa* E.W. Rubaale about *Ndahura*'s heroic deeds coincide too closely with the military achievements that Nyakatura attributes to *Omukama Cwamali I* to be merely accidental:

Ndahura -the first Mucwezi to expand Bunyoro-Kitara[83] Ndahura went and captured some cows from Karo Karungi, which is the present Nkore. From there he went to Rwanda and spent there many years. He also captured from this place. On his way back he passed via Mboga in Zaire and emerged at *Kiijura* in Tooro or Masindi.[84]	Cwa I or Cwamali -the 10th Babiito king (Nyakatura 1973:58) -dated to around mid-1600 (Webster 1979:34) *Omukama* Cwa launched campaign or cattle raid on Karo Karungi (Nkore), where he defeated King Ntare Kitabanyoro who went in exile. Cwamali occupied that country for three years and then he went on to conquer Rwanda, which during four years' occupation became the main centre for his raiding expeditions against countries lying to the west, even going beyond Lake Kivu. He died in Rwanda and was buried there, not in Kitara (Nyakatura 1973:72-74).

There is not much doubt that the tradition I recorded in Tooro about the first *Mucwezi* king *Ndahura* is a mirror of the heroic deeds of the 10th *Mubiito* king *Cwa*. The main traits in the narratives about *Cwamali* and *Ndahura* basically differ on one point, namely that *Cwamali* died and was buried in Rwanda, while *Ndahura* went back and "emerged at *Kiijura*". It is important to pay attention to the fact that *Omukama Cwamali* is said to have died and was buried in Rwanda and not in *Kitara*. On this note Nyakatura (1973:73) adds the following remark:

> Usually when an *Omukama* died, his officials tried to hide the fact. From this developed the custom of saying that the king has been lost or has been swallowed up.

The stereotype of kings who "get lost" or are "swallowed up" is a recurring theme in the *Bacwezi* drama, which Nyakatura explains within the framework of the symbolic language of kingship, *rukale*. No mention that the king had died, because kings were not expected to die and abandon their people. Just as *Wamara* in the Ihangiro tradition had come back as a *Mucwezi* spirit, in line with the interlacustrine belief system, it was the spirit, *Omucwezi*, of *Omukama Cwamali* that would have emerged in the

shape of *Ndahura* at *Kiijura*, located alternatively in Tooro or in Masindi, the Bantu/Luo borderland. The meaning of the name of the place where *Ndahura* emerged, *Kiijura*, indicates that the spiritual adaptation of *Cwamali* must have been longing for home. It is derived from the verb *ku-jura*, which means 'to be homesick' (Davis 1938/1952:55). The body of *Cwamali* may have been buried in Rwanda, but in the form of *Ndahura* the king had to return to the land where he belonged.

Plate 17. From inside the cave formations of stalactites and stalagmites, explained in terms of local traditions as *Nyinamwiru's* breasts, *Amabele ga Nyinamwiru, Amakomi ga Ndahura*, Tooro

In a special way *Ndahura* and *Nyinamwiru* are connected to the soil of the land in Tooro. The spiritual presence of *Ndahura* and "his" mother *Nyinamwiru* is still felt in the village *Amakomi ga Ndahura*, 'The cattle pegs of *Ndahura*' outside Fort Portal, Tooro.

> There is a belief that he stayed there and may be his mother came with him. That is why her *hagasasa* are there. *Hagasasa* are regarded as the mother's breasts.
>
> There is a footprint, *ekigere*, of *Ndahura* and there is a stick, *omwigo*, nearby. His cattle used to assemble at the *makomi*, 'cattle pegs'. And there is the cattle trough, *obwato*. And somewhere there are marks of *Ndahura*'s dog on the rock beyond the great lake. People say that they have been seeing fires burning, hearing cows mowing and dogs barking and the drums sounding. There is a shrine where *Ndahura*'s spears used to be kept. It was believed that nobody could build a house there and live in peace.[85]

According to Kinyankore beliefs and traditions, nobody could build a house in "the best grazing lands of the *Bacwezi*". Neither could anybody settle where *Ndahura* and *Nyinamwiru* are said to have passed. In a

cave nearby the white liquid dripping from stalactites and stalagmites are likened to the milk of *Nyinamwiru*'s breasts, so the place is called *Amabele ga Nyinamwiru*, 'The breasts of *Nyinamwiru*'.[86]

The Bunyoro Centre

The question is now whether *Omukama Cwa I*, also called *Cwamali*, is identical with the great "Luo ancestor" bearing the same name, *Cwaa Mali*. "Travelled and literate" Luo-speaking informants (cf. Wrigley 1981:234) claim that *Cwaa Mali* led the Luo in their migration from Ethiopia to *Loka Nam*, "across the Nile", where they are said to have settled in a particular place now called *Chope* or *Pawir* in Bunyoro. *Pajule* clan elders asserted that *Cwaa Mali* became the grandfather of all the Luo-speakers, some of whom would split up and migrate back northwards to settle in the present Acholi, Kitgum district. Others are said to have moved southwards, where they are believed to have established the *Bacwezi* dynasty.[87] The *Pajule* spokesman related that the grandchildren of *Cwaa Mali* "extended the name of *Cwaa* southwards and *Bacwezi* is the *P'Cwaa* of the southern migrants".[88]

Here we must examine the etymology of the name *Cwa Mali*. The Runyoro adverb *mali* means 'truly, really, certainly'; *omusaija mali* is heard about 'a thorough man' (Davis 1938/1952:90). The Luo form would be *Omal* (Onyango-ku-Odongo and Webster 1976:20). So the source of the name must be sought in Bunyoro. The proposed *Ndahura* spiritual adaptation of the *Mubiito Omukama Cwamali I* should be placed in its cultural context. In view of the milieu of common beliefs in the Bantu/Luo borderlands a shared *Bacwezi* cultural heritage can be justified. Adefuye (1976:283) explained that the most common type of "god" among the Luo is the *jok* (plur. *jogi*) that is associated with a particular place, often a mountain or a hill. In Bunyoro there are certain spirits, *Bacwezi*, believed to be staying in the hills, namely *Kiguulya*, *Mubende*, *Ngobya* and *Musaija Mukuru*. The two last mentioned *Bacwezi*, *Ngobya* and *Musaija Mukuru*, are the most important *Bacwezi* for the *Babiito* kings.[89]

Isingoma, the "Twin" *Omufumu* Who Turns into *Kibandwa*

Nyakatura (1970:97) related that *Basazima* clan officials were the original guardians of *Mubende* Hill, the hill of the *Mucwezi Ndahura*'s shrine. According to tradition this was the place where the first *Babiito* kings were installed.[90] The *Kibandwa* (*nyakatagara*) priest of *Ngobya* hill and his group in Bunyoro explained the importance of *Nyinamwiru*, "mother of the kings" and how the same *Basazima* clan had been promoted to *Kibandwa* of the *Babiito* kings. The royalty of the *Babiito* had been distinguished by the ambiguous symbolic trait of twin-ship. The same trait came forth in the name of the diviner, *Karongo*, who was said to have divided the waters for the first *Babiito* to pass. During prayers the mediums in the shrine at the foot of the *Ngobya* hill smoke a twinned pipe (see picture). So is the peculiarity of twin-ship diagnostic of the *omufumu* who would mediate spiritual blessing to *Omukama Cwa* I and become *Kibandwa*:

> The twin brothers *Isingoma* and *Kato* of the *Basazima* clan came from Kisindizi village in Buruli County, currently in Masindi District. They set off their journey and travelled up to *Ngobya*, where they had a rest. Later on they continued with their journey and went to Bugangaizi, at present in Kibale District. In Bugangaizi they found a hill similar to *Ngobya*. While there, *Isingoma* requested his brother, *Kato*, to stay at this hill for he, *Isingoma*, went back to *Ngobya* hill, which he had admired before.
>
> From the time *Isingoma* arrived in *Ngobya*, he began to play a major role in divination, *kuragura*, and many people would consult him. It was during this time when *Omukama Cwa* I lived long. In this same period he fell sick and consulted many diviners, *abafumu*, who were unsuccessful in finding the cure of the king's sickness. Those were the diviners who informed the king of a diviner who was staying at *Ngobya* hill and asked him to come and perform the same role. *Isingoma*, the *omufumu*, was brought to the palace before the king. He divined for the king and told him, Your Majesty, *Kabumba*, when the cows will be returning to their enclosures in the evening, your boil will be cured. The king did not believe in what *Isingoma* said, so he ordered his soldiers, *abagaragara*, to guard *Isingoma* until what he said would come true.
>
> At the exact time for the cows to return in their enclosures, there came a huge snake in the palace. As it was approaching, the king's guard, *omulinzi*, shouted in great fear: "Your Majesty, you are dying! Here comes a huge

> snake!" At that critical moment the king rose up in great fear to save his life. And as he was running, the boil burst.
>
> After this the king summoned his soldiers to bring *Isingoma* immediately before him. He told *Isingoma*, "I have seen all that you foretold me". Meanwhile the boil was letting out pus. The king found it fitting to thank this diviner for saving his life. He was thanked in form of rewards and they were as follows: he was given slaves and slave girls, *abairu n'abaranga*, some regalia: a drum covered with a white, *Kitale* cow skin,[91] trumpets and *engaija*, a long type of drum. Since that time *Ngobya* spirit, *omucwezi/kibandwa* has always been welcome to the palace as an additional reward. And the things necessary for the initiation ceremony come from the *Babiito*.[92]

Omucwezi Ngobya is a spirit of the land itself, *Ngobya* Hill, said to have blessed *Omukama Cwa* I, revealing its healing power in the form of a big snake at a specific time of crisis. That was said to be the time when *Omukama Cwa* I "lived long". *-kura* is a verb in Runyoro that means 'get old' (Davis 1938/1952:84). In Karagwe, when a king died, they would never mention straightforwardly that he had died. Instead they would say that he grew old, *Omukama yakura*.[93] Moreover, the spirit revelation occurred precisely at the time when the cows returned to their enclosures. *Kutahya*, 'to bring home the herds', is another euphemism used when a king died.[94] The time when the cows come back in the evening is also the blessed hour when the Munyankore bride would arrive at her new home (Roscoe 1932:35). The impression of a *rite de passage* is obvious.[95]

Nyakatura (1970:54-55) stressed that during the time of "the Batembuzi dynasty that ended with King Isaza ..." the people in "Kitara" did not seem to have practised spirit mediumship. There were, however, divination and prophecy, *kuragura*, a custom that should be differentiated from *kubandwa* spirit mediumship.

> In Bunyoro the practice of *Mbandwa* spirit possession started originally as an attempt by a people striving in a perplexing and often hostile world to find an answer to their troubles [...]. It appears that from the beginning of the Bito dynasty, when Mpuga Rukidi was in power, the people were beset with a strange feeling of fearfulness (Nyakatura 1970:54-55).

Plate 18. **Priests of the Babiito in Bunyoro smoke the twinned pipe. Left: the heir to the line of *Kibandwa wa Ngobya* priesthood, Venance Byaruhanga, *Ngobya* shrine**

The tradition about the divine intervention that transformed the *omufumu Isingoma* to *Kibandwa wa Ngobya* can be interpreted as an origin myth of *kubandwa* spirit mediumship. Not only does twin-ship reoccur as a salient characteristic of kingship and spirit mediumship alike, the importance of the medium is also stressed by the amplicative prefix *Ki-* denoting greatness. Since then the *Omucwezi* spirit of *Ngobya*, whose messengers are perceived as clean-hearted people, *bantu bakwera*,[96] has been helping the *Babiito* to overcome problems of war, diseases and other hardships. Of the spirits that stay in the hills of Bunyoro, *Ngobya* and *Musaija Mukuru* are the most important *Bacwezi* for the *Babiito* kings, spiritual agents for the soil of the land that have had important roles in the modern political history of Uganda.[97]

Kibira: Shrine of the First Owners of the Soil

Believers in search for help and spiritual guidance flock to the shrine at the foot of the *Ngobya* hill. The *Kibandwa* and his assistants perform the sacred rituals and pray for those in need. Before visitors are allowed to enter the shrine, *ihangiro* (cf. Nyakatura 1970:5), they are bid welcome to sit in the house at the entrance, the *kibira*.[98] Its floor is covered with lemon grass, *emyaliro* or *etete*.[99] *Kibira* has two doorways, *emilyango ibili*, one entry and an exit opposite. The informants consulted for the reason explained that it has always been built this way to enable the spirit to enter and go out freely.[100]

A regional investigation of the term *kibira*, 'forest', reveals that it is linked to royal shrines and burial places. In Tooro the term *kibira* is the name of the house that serves as an entrance to the royal tombs at Karambi near Fort Portal.[101] *Kibira* means 'forest' in Luhaya, Runyambo, Runyankore/Rukiga (Taylor 1959:40) and Luganda. One knowledgeable person on the royal shrines in Buganda explained to Benjamin Ray (1991:138-139, 141, 143) that the interior architecture of the shrines is based on the tradition about *Kintu*'s disappearance in the forest at Magonga. Allegedly, that was the reason why the shrines of his successors contained an inner sanctuary, called the forest, *kibira*. The royal spirit was perceived to dwell in the *kibira* secluded from the public by a bark cloth screen.[102]

Like the *kibira,* inner sanctuaries in Buganda shrines would house royal spirits, manifestations of great ancestors would dwell in the *kibira* entrance to the shrines devoted to the spirits of the land in Bunyoro:

> In the ancient times, after prayers, supernatural beings in the form of leopards, lions or pythons would come and rest in the *kibira* house. When any of the mentioned creatures would come in this house, it would symbolise a peaceful future. These creatures were not harmful, so whenever they would come, many people would come near to see them. They were like dogs, so some people would touch them.[103]

Lions, leopards and snakes are perceived as embodiments of the first owners of the soil. In Bunyoro the power of the *Kibandwa* medium of

the *Babiito* derives from its capacity to call upon the spirits of the land itself. The *Kibandwa* of *Ngobya* had felt an irresistible calling from the spirit: *Ensi niyo yamukomere*, 'the land itself had chosen him', it had spoken to him directly.[104] I asked the *Kibandwa* which language the *Omucwezi Ngobya* uses.

> The *Omucwezi Ngobya* speaks Runyoro language like a human being and it does not change language. Why is it that the *Omucwezi Ngobya* does not change language while other spirits do? That is how it was created.[105]

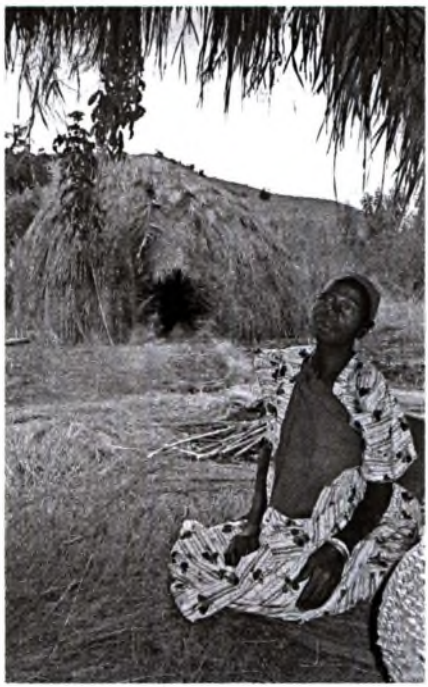

Plate 19. **Prayer can begin. The chairperson of the embandwa in the village, Tophas Namahunge, has lit the fire. She sits outside the kibira entrance facing the Ngobya shrine and Hill, perceived as the spirit, *Mucwezi*, of the land itself**

Beattie studied the *embandwa* spirit mediumship cult in Bunyoro. He (1961:22) explained: "the exclusive and 'secret society' aspect of *mbandwa* cult membership is strikingly expressed by the use of a peculiar *mbandwa* vocabulary". Initiates have to learn this vocabulary in the course of the initiation period (*kutendeka*). When they are in a state of possession, or when laymen are present, mediums use it. It is my impression therefore that prayers at the shrine of the *Ngobya* hill are different from the more individualistic ritual practices Beattie observed. The *Mucwezi* God planted in the hill represents kingship.

Interlacustrine kings are not expected to die and abandon their people. So *Omukama Cwa I* may have died in Rwanda, but his spirit would be expected to prevail. It was said first to have emerged at *Kiijura*. Now it finally arrived at *Ngobya*, because the meaning of the name *Ngobya* is exactly 'where I arrived'.[106] *Cwamali*'s spiritual adaptation *Ndahura* finally "arrived" in the soil of the earth to grant the necessary legitimacy to the *Babiito* from the first owners of the land.

Nyinamwiru: The One-breasted

The *Mucwezi* himself, perceived as a man, was believed to have taught them all the praise songs. Here the mother of *Ndahura*, *Nyinamwiru Ow'ekibele kimoi*, 'the one with one big breast', has a prominent position in prayers. After *Kazooba Nyamuhanga*, the Creator, she is evoked in songs and praised as the mother of the kings, here termed 'warriors who went on a mission and returned victorious', *abatabaazi n'abatabaaruki*:

Nyinamwiru Adyeri,[107]	The one with one big breast
Ow'ekibere kimoi	Who breast-fed the warriors who
Ayonkeze[108] *abatabaazi*	went on a mission and came back
n'abatabaaruki	victorious.[109]

On behalf of those who come for advice when looking for a suitable wife, *Nyinamwiru* is their ideal woman:

Nimweretera Ow'ekibere	Oh yes, bring for yourselves the
kibungabunga,	one (wife–woman) with a big
	swinging breast.[110]

For those who come to clean themselves from the influence of evil spirits, they beseech *Nyinamwiru* to 'filter' and remove it all:

Sengeija, Ow'ekibere–	Purify (filter) it, the one with a
Nyinamwiru,	big breast–*Nyinamwiru*
Dora Adyeri Nyinamwiru,	Look Adyeri *Nyinamwiru*,
Byona caali, osengeije	Please purify everything
Caali wewe, Nyinamwiru,	Please *Nyinamwiru*, purify
N'amahembe osengeije,	Purify even the evil spirits
	(horns)[111]

The "white" *Bacwezi* spirits are expected to clean, *kweza*, and purify the house from all the evil in any form (Beattie 1961:16). So the "whiteness" of *Rukidi*'s alleged *Bacwezi* descent does not in the first place refer to skin colour (contra Nyakatura 1973:61). It can be a symbolic allusion referring to the *Bacwezi* spiritual role of catharsis[112] to clean and heal the wounds of an afflicted society suffering from the socio-economic consequences caused by environmental constraints of drought, cattle disease and cattle raiding military activities.

The *Omucwezi Ngobya* was believed to be created in Bunyoro and spoke Runyoro. The mother of *Ndahura*, the first *Mucwezi* king in the official Kinyoro records, was perceived to be the mother of all the warrior kings of the *Babiito*, *abatabazi n'abatabaruki*, 'warriors who went on a mission and returned victorious'. So politically *Ndahura* can be a projection of the *Babiito* "empire builders" expanding their influence from the Bunyoro centre. But spiritually, to the *Babiito*, the *Bacwezi* had to be rooted in the hills of Bunyoro. *Nyinamwiru* the One-breasted is their link to the soil of the land.[113] "She" is moulded from the shared symbolism inherent to interlacustrine spiritual women prototypes, because in the context of Karagwe, *Mugasha*'s wife was said to have only one eye, one ear, one arm, one breast and one leg.[114]

Regional Expansionists

The *Bacwezi* mediums of *Ngobya* hill praise *Nyinamwiru* for breast-feeding the warrior kings, *abatabaazi n'abatabaaruki*, who 'went on a mission and came back victorious'. A Munyoro spokesman simply stated that as head of the army the *Omukama* could fight another kingdom and come back "won or defeated".[115] In the specific context of Rwandan politics of expansion the *Umwami* (king) played the important part of *umutabaazi*, 'saviour' or 'hero', which means that he could save and expand the nation in battle by shedding his blood on the soil of another country (Vansina 1962:39). When a Rwandan king performed the act of *gutabaara*, 'go to war and die while fighting', the states under attack automatically had to give up their resistance.[116] In earlier research this custom has been applied to the general theoretical context of "the divine kingship" (Vansina 1962:39). On account of the internal evidence

presented here I suggest that the persona *Ndahura* alias *Cwamali* is the actor that inspired the institutionalisation of the *gutabaara* ideology in Rwanda.[117]

Origin traditions on the Milk Test theme recorded in Rwanda recreate *Kigwa*, the persona, who descended from "Heaven", regionally understood in terms of the Bunyoro "centre of creation". *Kigwa* is derived from the verb *ku-gwa*, which in Runyoro means 'fall' (Davis 1938/1952:38). The Banyankore have a noun, *okugwa*, 'fall' or 'attack' (Taylor 1959:54), which fits into the picture. *Cwamali* is the king, who attacked Rwanda with the purpose of raiding cattle. The spiritual adaptation of *Cwamali*, *Ndahura*, has a name alluding to cattle raiding, *ku-huura*. The spirit would be expected to fall, *ku-gwa*. King *Kigwa*, who "fell from Heaven", is said to have submitted his three sons, *Gatwa*, *Gahutu* and *Gatutsi* to the Milk Test in order to establish who would be the outcast, the servant and the overlord. Nyakatura (1973:73) explained that during the four years *Omukama Cwa* I ruled Rwanda he reorganised the country according to "the pattern he was used to in Kitara":

> In the Chronicles of Rwanda, the Kitara occupation of that country is said to have been of great importance because Chwa I left a legacy of good administration.[118]

On the socio-economic level, the changes *Omukama Cwa* is said to have brought to the Rwandan State system could have been social stratification, suggested by Milk Test traditions administered from the Bunyoro centre. The ideology of *gutabaara* could be inspired from the same source. Shedding their blood on the soil of another country, kings in Rwanda, who died in battle, were valued as saviours, *abatabaazi* and expansionists of the nation. *Omukama Cwa I* in Bunyoro died in Rwanda; in the spiritual form of *Ndahura* "he emerged" in *Kiijura*, from *ku-jura*, 'to be home-sick', finally to "arrive" at *Ngobya* Hill. The *Babiito* could not undertake their campaigns without the blessing of the *Bacwezi* spirits of the Bunyoro hills, the "centre of creation" from where they were perceived to have expanded the kingdom, referred to in recent sources as the Bunyoro-Kitara Empire.[119]

Evidently, African frontiers move with the power constellations of their times (Kopytoff 1989), so in retrospect it is hard to define territories of ancient states claimed by oral historians. The extension of "the Bunyoro-Kitara Empire" is said to have covered most of the present western and central Uganda (Dunbar 1965:V, Nyakatura 1973:1). Sutton (1993:39) remarked that in 1862 when the explorers Speke and Grant arrived at the court of King *Rumanyika* I in Karagwe, they were told about the former extensive kingdom of "Kittara"[120], which shows that the name was known in the region. Elders I interviewed in Buhaya mentioned *Kitara* as the name of the territory lying north of the Kagera River, by Kinyoro sources known as the present Missenye area in north western Tanzania (Nyakatura 1973:247).[121] Mwalimu Yazidi Makora, close to the royal families in Buhaya, said that

> The kings could never be buried in soil. They were buried in a boat that was carried to *Kitara* (Missenye) or beyond the river, *buseli*, because the soil of his own land could never swallow a king. The spirits of the deceased kings could haunt the living king and the rest of the people. This custom could be found in ... Kyamutwara and especially in Kiziba ...[122]

Rev. E. Lutashobya, Kiziba, ascertained that in the olden days, before the coming of the Europeans, "kings were taken back to *Kitara* after death".[123]

It appears that the "empire" of the Banyoro expansionists does not allow itself to be defined by physical geographic boundaries. The "empire of the *Bacwezi*" was more than "an imaginary geopolitical construction" (Chrétien 1985). According to their "religious vision of the world", to the peoples living between the lakes, it was real. Rather than an old state defined by physical boundaries, the "empire of the *Bacwezi*" appears as a system of kingship, by the Banyoro exercised in terms of military expansion. A comparative regional investigation of the *rukale* term *kutabaaza*, 'to bury' and its semantic associations demonstrates the spread of the ideology of expansion from the Bunyoro "centre of creation":

Table 6. Bunyoro expansion ideology

RUTARA	*kutabaaza*	*abatabaazi*	*kutabaara*
Bunyoro	'to bury a king'[124] 'make to go to war'[125]	'the ones who work or fight for the king'[126]	'go to war', 'go up to the capital'[127]
Tooro	'to bury a king'[128]		
Nkore	'to bury a king'[129] 'cause war', 'go to law'[130]	'those visiting a king or chief; accusers (at law)'[131]	'go to war', 'destroy', 'visit the capital'[132]
Rujumbura		'travellers'[133]	'to bring things to the king'[134]
Karagwe	'to bury a king'[135]		'to die (for a king)',[136] 'to visit'[137]
Kiziba			'to go to war'[138]
Kyamutwara			'to go on a journey'[139]
Kianja	'to bury a king'[140]		'to go and fight'[141]
WESTERN HIGHLANDS	*gutabaaza*	*abatabaazi*	*gutabaara*
Rwanda	'to bury a king'[142]	'saviours or heroes', 'kings who sacrificed themselves and gave their blood for the defense of their country'[143]	'to die for a king', 'to depart'[144], 'go to war and die while fighting'[145]
NORTH NYANZA	*kutabaaza*	*abatabaazi*	*kutabaala*
Buganda	'send to war, use for fighting, drill (soldiers), exercise'[146]	'the king's warriors', 'those who went to loot and extend the kingdom'[147]	'go to war'[148]

The incidence of *kutabaaza* terminology and its associations exposes a regional pattern involving nationalities of all the three language groups in expansion activities. The *Bahima* must have been engaged in military campaigns, be-

cause "*Bahima* wall paintings" in Nkore include a symbol of a trench termed *enteeko y'abatabaazi*.[149] Therefore, the *Bahima* would have been shrewd soldiers, not as Onyango-ku-Odongo said, "bad fighters" in comparison to the Luo.

Plate 20. Enteeko y'abatabaazi

Expansion to the North

An important dynastic tradition from Buhaya communicates the belief that kingship drums symbolising the right to rule were distributed from the Bunyoro "centre of creation". Kingship drums inherited from the *Bacwezi* were allegedly distributed from the Bunyoro centre to the north, to the *Rwot* clan leadership of the Luo-speaking Acholi and Alur peoples, who thereby attained royal dignity from the *Mukama* of Bunyoro (Crazzolara 1937:13). Okeny (1982:168) suggested that state formation in Panyikwara of north-western Acholi was intimately associated with the introduction of the concept of the drum by the *Pajule*. Atkinson (1976:267, 1984:92) described the great changes estimated to have occurred in western Acholi between 1680 and 1780 originating in northern Bunyoro. According to Adefuye (1976:254) many "chiefdoms" were established in a period, when there was an almost continuous exodus of *Palwo* out of *Pawir* [*Chope*] (north eastern Bunyoro). Mzee Fidele Lodi of the *Ogole* clan in *Pajule* explained that

> the most important aspect of the Luo who came from Bunyoro to Acholi was that wherever they went, they would establish their kingship very quickly over the other people.[150]

The *Pajule* clan elders gathered at Oryang related that they have a history of migration from Bunyoro, from where their great ancestor, *Lagoro Aboga*, is said to have brought the royal drum, *bul ker*.[151] To the *Pajule*, *Lagoro Aboga* never died but lives on through its chosen medium,

the *Rwot Tipu*, the spiritual king. Mzee Gwido Latigo Olal belongs to one of the many clans in Pajule that recognise the paramount spiritual rule of *Lagoro*. His description of *Lagoro* spiritual influence upon local socio-political administrative units is informative to the scope and purpose of the present study:

> *Lagoro* is the overall spiritual king, *Rwot Tipu*, who provides and gives to everyone in the whole of Pajule. Pajule here refers to an area covering twelve[152] administrative units, each one under their administrative king, *Rwot Kitupa*. They belong to *Lagoro* and are all of the same origin. The twelve kings were purely administrative, which means that they had to abide by the instructions given to them by *Lagoro*. The instructions may include decisions for going to wars, prayers from the mountains for rain, New Moon celebrations and other rituals.[153]

The Luo term for 'administrative king', *Rwot Kitupa*, is interesting. Elders consulted in Acholi said that *kitupa* is the local word for "the most important tree associated with royal palaces", because it is "planted on top of all the graves of the *rwodi*, 'kings'".[154] It brings us back to *Bacwezi* kingship symbolism expressed in traditions formulated in the Bunyoro centre. For the purpose of legitimacy the Banyoro told the story that connects them to *Isimbwa*'s "son" *Kyomya Rumera*, perceived as the *Mucwezi*, who had "produced all the *Bacwezi* remaining on earth". Then *Kato Kimera* was sent to Buganda, for if he were "rooted" there like the bark cloth tree, *omutoma*, "no danger will come from there". In Luo-speaking people's context we found a king named *Cwa Mera*, again signalling origin in Bunyoro. The *Pajule* spokesman said that their kings used to wear a robe made of bark cloth, *kanyu kitupa*, allegedly brought from Bunyoro.[155] Therefore, the *kitupa* tree planted on the royal graves in Acholi should be a bark cloth tree. But the question arises as to why the Luo-speaking *Pajule* have adopted the Luganda root for bark cloth tree, *-tuba* (Snoxall 1967:227), instead of the Runyoro *-toma* (Davis 1938/1952:184), if the bark cloth robe were brought from Bunyoro? The word *kitupa* that connects to the bark cloth tree in Acholi kingship contexts could be a Luganda loanword, testifying

to a late regional involvement in the expansion ideology of kingship spread from Bunyoro.

Mzee Gwido Latigo repeated the belief that the *Pajule*, perceived as a migration group, originated "from Egypt, came to Ethiopia, then to Sudan, Bunyoro and finally Acholi". The *Pajule*, then, were supposed to have travelled "with their spiritual kingship and spirit possession as they migrated along their routes".[156] The history of Western Nilotic migrations is another story beyond the scope of the present study. Suffice it to say that the *Lagoro* spiritual kingship of the *Pajule* should be placed in its specific context of Luo/Bantu cultural interactions emanating from the Bunyoro "centre of creation".

The new evidence from the Bunyoro scene has shown that there is no one-to-one answer to the question about the identity of the *Bacwezi*. The concept of the *Bacwezi* here represents kingship generally. *Ndahura* as "the first *Mucwezi*" emerges as a late projection of the *Babiito*.

Wamara: "the last Mucwezi", King of Kings and Spirits

The Banyoro (Nyakatura 1973:61) and the Banyankore[157] are explicit about their belief that *Wamara* was the last king of the *Bacwezi*. For a deeper understanding of that perception we have to place it in the context of the clan-related interlacustrine belief system.

Clans and *Bacwezi* spirits

Chapter 5 introduced the clan basis of beliefs in this region. Hultkrantz' (1981-82:15) insight that "social structure constitutes a model for the arrangement of religious form" is key to unlocking aspects of the *Bacwezi* problem. On this point Hultkrantz' religio-ecological method is helpful. In a similar way as the physical environment can influence a people's religious form, specific mechanisms pertaining to the social environment can affect religious structures. In the words of Hultkrantz (1981-82:15):

> ... social structure constitutes a model for the arrangement of religious forms. For instance, the complexity of relations between gods in a pantheon mirrors socio-political organisation and kinship relations.

The analytical tool needed to elucidate *Bacwezi* relation to religion as well as history of the interlacustrine peoples emerges from the reality of clan-related customs and beliefs. The outcome of a synchronic analysis of the interdependence between social structures and religious form can then be utilised to draw historical conclusions.

To the Banyambo of Karagwe the *Bacwezi* are ancestor spirits, because they call them *bazimu*,[158] the general word for ancestor spirits. Ta Kaffrinkana, a most faithful traditionalist in Ahakishaka, spoke of the Banyambo as the children of *Wamara*:

> *Ichwe tuli baana ba Wamara*, 'we are the children of *Wamara*'. *Wamara* is the father of all the *Bacwezi*, every *Mucwezi*, all of them, he is their father. We are *Wamara*'s children and it is *Wamara* who gives us our children, because he is the first child of God (Farelius 1978:23).

Although the Banyambo regard the *Mucwezi Wamara* as their father and mention "him" as a *muzimu*, they know that "he" is not the spirit of a local ancestor of either the Banyambo or the Bahaya. Korit-Schoner (1942:13) deemed the *Bacwezi* in Buhaya as "superimposed *Hinda* deities" and "historical characters and members of the ruling clan of the *Bacwezi*". Old people in Karagwe, who had never been directly exposed to the literate world, believed that the *Bacwezi* had been ancient kings in Bunyoro (Farelius 1978:23).[159]

There is enough evidence from the context of North-western Tanzania to show that *Wamara* is a foreigner, perceived to be from Bunyoro, whom certain clans in Karagwe and Buhaya adopted as their guardian. At the same time the *Mucwezi Wamara* has a close spiritual relationship to the Bahaya kings, who allegedly came with him. From the kingdom of Ihangiro Rev. S. Machumu repeated the tradition that the ruling *Bahinda* clan came from Bunyoro with their *Omuzimu Wamara*.[160] Rev. S. Kahakwa, also from Ihangiro, explained the importance of spirits from outside:

> There was a tendency to accept a hero spirit from outside. They were looked at as superior. When the *embandwa* is possessed by a spirit from outside, he talks in a louder voice to express the power of the spirit. The spirit could

> shake him or collapse him when he was in that mood. He could make him silent for five to ten minutes and after that the *embandwa* can speak in a loud voice. This was seen as a sign of power and prestige and would stabilise priesthood.[161]

The Bahaya esteem hero spirits from outside, whom they readily accept into their traditional religious system.

For "the Kitara complex" Carole Buchanan (1969, 1974) gathered source material from clan histories for a reconstruction of the historical development of the *Bacwezi* cult. By supplementing the "vernacular political histories" with clan traditions Buchanan unfolded the historical nature of the "Bacwezi religious innovation" (1969:4). When examining clan histories Buchanan found that each clan had its specific *Mucwezi* guardian spirit, with which the *nyakatagara* medium could communicate on behalf of the extended family group or lineage (1969:2-4). In spite of the fact that the *Mucwezi* spirit is not regarded as an ancestor to the clan, among certain clans the *Mucwezi* is said to have had a mother from their clan (1974:131). The implication here is that the patrilineal clans functioned as social categories. This means that clans were historically dynamic units working as vehicles by which foreigners like immigrants and war captives were absorbed into the social system. Clan traditions that were kept and transferred through the generations include not only migration stories but also traditions of the *Bacwezi* who became guardian spirits of their clans (Buchanan 1969:4-5).

Just as the clans in "the Kitara complex" assimilated foreigners into the social system, sources from North-western Tanzania show that clans in Buhaya and Karagwe adopted foreign spirits as their guardian and a mediating spirit to God, the Creator. A foreign spirit became an adopted parent, regarded as an ancestor spirit, *omuzimu* or *omucwezi*, which explains the Banyambo conclusion that *Wamara* was traditionally believed to be their father.

Buchanan's evidence yields independent confirmation of a similar pattern around the persona *Isimbwa*. Her study of clans that transfer *Bacwezi* traditions in "the Kitara complex" shows that the "immigrant

foreigner" *Isimbwa* was linked by intermarriage to certain important clans, such as the *Basiita* and the *Basingo*. The figure of *Isimbwa*, recorded as "grandfather" in the *Bacwezi* genealogy Buchanan reconstructed, is according to her (1974:130) a symbol of the transition *to* "the Bacwezi period". In my interpretation the *Isimbwa* persona can be a retrospective Runyoro device encapsulating the very process of assimilation of foreigners by intermarriage into local prominent clans. That process must have *followed* the decline and fall of a "dynasty" at *Bigo*, the "dynasty" that came to be called *Bacwezi*. Here the concept of *Bacwezi* can be interpreted as a conflation of spirits and kings.

Basiita clan traditions relate that *Isimbwa* married a *Musiita* who gave birth to *Mulindwa*, recorded in the official court traditions as regent while *Ndahura* campaigned (Nyakatura 1973:28). *Mulindwa* was not an ancestor of the patrilinear *Basiita* clan but became guardian spirit of "his" mother's clan (Buchanan 1969:7). In a similar manner as foreigners could be integrated into the clan societies of "the Kitara complex", spirits of foreigners could be adopted as guardians of those clans. The acceptance of a spirit from outside mirrored the acceptance of foreigners into the clan system among Rutara-speaking peoples. The mechanism to assimilate strangers into the clan system constituted the model for the form of the *Bacwezi* religious innovation.

The *Bacwezi* as "foreigners"

Mzee I. Katuuka, a *Muhima* testifying for the Banyankore of Nyabushozi, explained that the *Bacwezi* were remembered as foreigners:

> 'The *Bacwezi* did not speak our language', *Bakaba tebagamba orulimi nk'orwaitu*. The diviner *Kakara ka Shagama*[162] had read the signs and told the *Bacwezi* that 'one day you will talk through other people's heads', *Byashanga nimugamba omu mitwe y'abandi* [...]. What *Kakara ka Shagama* divined came to pass after the *Abacwezi* had left. People started to venerate them as *emandwa* and during such rites would only use the *Bacwezi* language.[163]

The perception of the *Bacwezi* as foreigners is also enshrined in the statement that "they" called the Kinyankore clans by specific names. The *Bashambo* "they" called *Abanyinakiro*, 'the people of *Kiro*'s mother' and "their" name for the *Abaishekatwa* was *Abanyin'enshoho*, 'the

people of *Enshoho*'s mother'.[164] This is interesting, because one of the mentioned *Bacwezi* names obtained for Kinyankore clans corroborates Buchanan's (1969:7) findings from "the Kitara complex" that *Isimbwa* had married into local prominent clans. That is why "they" were said to have called those Kinyankore clans "the people or family of so and so's mother". Buchanan (1969:7) names *Nyakira* as the "son" of *Isimbwa* with a *Musambo* (Kinyoro pronunciation of *Mushambo*) "mother". It is possible that *Kiro* in *Aba-nyina-kiro*, the *Bacwezi* name for the *Bashambo*, is a short form for the name of a *Mucwezi* spirit Roscoe (1923b:22) mentions for Bunyoro: *Nyakiriro*, alternatively named *Nkiro*. Karagwe information collected in the 1970's may complement this picture. Two knowledgeable elders in Karagwe with *Bashambo* clan affiliation mentioned *Nyakiriro* among the most important *Bacwezi* spirits. The *embandwa* Kyabona said "he" was "a *muhima w'ente*, 'a *muhima* of cows'".[165] The second generation of Buchanan's (1974:131) *Bacwezi* "genealogy" reproduces *Kiro* as the "son" of *Mugenyi*.

Contrary to Posnansky (1969:144) the name *Mugenyi* means 'visitor', 'guest', or 'stranger' in Runyankore (Taylor 1959:190), Runyoro (Davies 1938/1952:101), Luhaya *as well as* Luganda (Snoxall 1967:212-213) and alludes to the perception that the *Bacwezi* were strangers. Therefore, in retrospect, the name *Mugenyi* was connected to *Bigo*: *Bigo bya Mugenyi*, 'the cattle enclosures of the stranger'. The "son" of the *Musingo* "mother" *Nyangoma*, 'of the drum', *Mugenyi* represents the end, *Wamara* (from *ku-mara*), of a "dynasty" at *Bigo*, retrospectively called *Bacwezi*. In *Omucwezikati* Kabanyoro's story "he" belonged to the first group of *Bacwezi*, those who prepared themselves to leave. Those who represent the "incoming" *Babiito* would adopt *Wamara* and make "him" their "last *Mucwezi*", who is said to have completed their "Empire".

Wamara Rusingo

Kinyoro traditions relate that the *Babiito* built their "Empire" with the spear called *Kimuli* belonging to *Wamara* of *Bwera* (Nyakatura 1973:82). *Bwera* refers to the spiritual and nominal kingdom ruled by the *Bamooli* iron-working clan of the *Bushbuck* totem, the keepers of the most important *Bacwezi* shrine centre in Masaka Hill, dedicated primarily to *Wamara* (Berger and Buchanan 1976:58-61). We have seen that the best blacksmiths of the *Babiito*, the *Bamooli*, were among their main supporters.

The Banyankore praise *Wamara* as *Rubambansi*, literally 'overruling the whole world as when one stretches the hide', interpreted as 'the king of kings' (Williams 1938:35). The same title designates the Nkore king.[166] *Omukama* E. Rukamba of Kyamutwara said that *Wamara* is known as *Omukama w'Abaranzi*. That is not because "he" used to be king of any physical *Baranzi* clan as had been claimed for *Bukuku*, *Nyinamwiru*'s symbolic "father".[167] *Wamara* has to be addressed *Omukama*, 'king', because in "his" capacity as "king of all the spirits", "he" is believed to be superior to the incumbent kings in the whole region:

> *Wamara* was the king of all the kings. That is eventually why he came to be called the king of all the spirits, *Omukama w'Abaranzi*. After his death then he came to change to a spirit known as *Wamara*, you see. And the place of dwelling as I have said was down to Igara,[168] then his spirit could spread all over the area of Buganda, Bunyoro, Nkore, Rwanda, Karagwe and Bukoba as a whole. From then we call whoever gets the spirit of *Wamara*–that is the spirit of *Wamara*, that is the *embandwa* of *Wamara*. [...] When we came from Buzinza we came with that spirit of *Wamara*.[169]

An important reason for the successful *Bahinda/Babiito*[170] accession to power in Buhaya was according to Kaijage (1971:552) that they "came to the help of people when they were in plight", thus demonstrating that their *Bacwezi* spiritual agency and ancestors were more powerful than the spirits of the indigenous rulers. The people would prefer leaders who could deliver on the material as well as spiritual level.[171] Therefore, in Kiziba, the first *Mubiito*, *Omukama* Kibi, could successfully overthrow the local *Muyango* ruler (Bike) because he came as a hunter, generously

distributing meat to the people.[172] Information from the kingdom of Ihangiro confirms the perception that the ruling *Bahinda* clan came from "Bunyoro *bwa* Ankole"[173] with their *Omuzimu Wamara*, as well as much livestock. They became rulers because they were rich in the context of those days. When the people of Ihangiro saw how the *Bahinda* paid homage to the spirit of *Wamara*, they too wanted to serve such a powerful spirit, just as they served the *Bahinda* (cf. Mutembei 1993:29). So they became *bairu*, 'servants', of *Wamara* and the *Bahinda* alike.[174] Independent information from the Banyankore elders ascertains that all his subjects were understood to be *bairu*, 'servants', of the king, whether they were *Abahima* or *Abairu*.[175]

There is evidence from Kiziba to show that the *embandwa*, 'medium' of *Wamara* had a special position as the king's High Priest. The king provides his tools and legal instruments, while the *embandwa* reads the signs and interprets the messages from the ancestors, *abazaire*.[176] As has been demonstrated in Chapter 7 it is imperative for the king to follow the spiritual guidance of his medium. This pattern of political and spiritual leadership function was suggested as being in the Ihangiro tradition, where the *Musiita* was said to rule together with *Omushengya*, the medium of the *Mucwezi* spirit of *Wamara*.

The penetration of the *Wamara* spiritual power of the *Bahinda/ Babiito* was deep-rooted in the population of Karagwe and Buhaya. *Wamara* is the most powerful hero spirit in Buhaya (Mulokozi 1987:141, Mutembei 1993:28). Among clan members in the village of Ahakishaka, Karagwe, *Wamara* proved to be the predominant clan spirit and guardian[177] (cf. B.K. Taylor 1962:142).

Plate 21. Kyabona, the *embandwa* of Ahakishaka, Karagwe, seeing, *okubona*, the invisible world. She is wearing the *emondo*, civet cat skin and the *Ekisingo*, crown, a term employed by kings and mediums alike

The title of *Wamara* is *Rusingo*[178] (from *ku-singa*, 'to defeat, to win'), because on the spiritual level "he" is regarded as the victor and the greatest hero spirit.[179] On the spiritual level, from the perspective of the Bahaya and the Banyambo, *Wamara* is regarded as "the ruler of the universe,[180] supreme among all other ... spirits, sovereign of all souls of the dead" (Katoke 1975:28, endnote 6). *Wamara* is said to have fulfilled all the spiritual needs of his believers.[181] The concept of victory is echoed in one of the titles of the Nkore kings, *Nyakusinga*, translated as 'one who is worthy' or prevailed.[182] The same notion is communicated in the verb *ku-singa*, when the *Omukama* of Bunyoro 'sits' on the throne *Nyamyaro*.[183] In Davis' (1938/1952:162) dictionary *kusinga*, 'to be well, sit in public' denotes a Runyoro verb used for the king exclusively. As a sign of *Wamara*'s victory, the mediums wear *ekisingo* crowns, a term verified in the context of the *embandwa* mediumship cult of six interlacustrine kingdoms.[184] The term for the royal crown used by the Karagwe and Buhaya kings is also *ekisingo*.[185] This was the case for the old *Bashambo* kingdoms or principalities of Igara[186] and Rujumbura as well. Mzee Philemon Kitaburaza, the heir to the throne of Rujumbura, explained that the *ekisingo* crown meant that he who wore it was charged with and given authority to pray to the spirits of their ancestors on everybody's behalf.[187]

> The Banyankore kings only wore the *ekisingo* crown at coronations and it was referred as *ekirunga*, 'crown'.[188]

WAMARA–SPIRITUAL RULER
Rusingo title (Karagwe)
ekisingo, *embandwa* crown (Karagwe, Buhaya: Kiziba, Nkore, Rujumbura, Igara, Bunyoro)
KING–POLITICAL RULER
Nyakusinga title (Nkore)
ekisingo, royal crown (Karagwe, Kyamutwara, Kiziba, Rujumbura, Nkore)
kusinga, to sit on the throne (Bunyoro)

What conclusions can be drawn from the duplication of meaning denoting victory inherent to the above-mentioned terminology for spiritual and political terminology, honorary titles and regalia? Victorious royal titles and regalia embrace *Wamara* mediums and *Bahinda* kings alike. This picture does not conform to *Wamara* in the traditional records. The Ihangiro tradition that explains how *Wamara* becomes a *Mucwezi* spirit depicts *Wamara* rather as a loser than a winner. In the Ihangiro tradition *Wamara* represents the decline and fall of a *Bacwezi* "dynasty" that is finished off at *Imara*, a name that could be interpreted as a religious adaptation for *Bigo*. As has been shown above the full title *Wamara Rusingo* is recorded for no other clan spirit but the *Basingo* in Karagwe. In the wider interlacustrine context the denomination *Wamara Rusingo* for the *Basingo* clan spirit strongly indicates that *Wamara Rusingo* represents the cursed *Musingo* ancestor, who brought down the dynasty at *Bigo*. Now "he" is posthumously resurrected as the great hero spirit, King of Kings and ruler of the universe. According to the belief system of the interlacustrine peoples such a powerful and despotic king as *Wamara* could not be defeated without pacification of "his" spirit, which had to be neutralised and brought under control through spirit mediumship (Farelius 1989:161).

On kingship level, in Bunyoro, the evil deeds of the *Basingo* ancestor had to be ritually averted by the human ritual killing of a *Musingo*.[189] During installation the Banyankore kings had to spit in the mouth of a *Musingo*.[190] Otherwise no king could rule in peace, *OBUSINGE* (Runyoro, Runyambo, Luhaya)/*OBUSINGYE* (Runyankore). Rooted in specific historical events in the remote past, the term *businge* for the normal state of human beings, peace, emerges as a key concept to describe the very essence of the Rutara-speaking peoples' purpose of life.[191]

Concluding Remarks

The Munyoro persona *Isimbwa*, "the little planting-spear", has proved to be a useful symbol applicable in revealing a deeper understanding of the overall historical interpretation of kingship traditions and the

origin of the *Bacwezi* religious innovation in the Great Lakes region. The research results in the present chapter show that *Isimbwa* does not only symbolise the mechanism of intermarriage between cattle-owning strangers and important women of resident clans. The multi-level concept of *Isimbwa* also mirrors general socio-political conditions of mobility and displacement characteristic of a society ravaged by natural calamities, wars and all sorts of hardships. In order to gain respect among their own subjects the *Babiito* invaders in Bunyoro needed to stabilise their position. Encroaching onto Bunyoro territory the advancing Buganda state power threatened the security of the country. In times of unrest and turmoil kings and commoners alike resorted to their *Bacwezi* ancestors with the all-embracing intention of restoring and retaining *businge/busingye*, 'peace'.

Describing their own history in the longterm context of *Bacwezi* ancestors and hero kings, the *Babiito* court ideologists in Bunyoro verbalised the traditions with the undisputed purpose of legitimacy. The *Bacwezi* traditions in Bunyoro tell the story about the *Babiito* themselves. Their insecure and shaky position is indicated in the ambiguous feature of twin-ship, a trait also characteristic of important diviners, who decide their destiny. By divine intervention the *Babiito* are secured a legitimate position as heirs of an alleged *Bacwezi* ancient dynasty, said to have ruled over the extensive Bunyoro-Kitara "Empire" in the remote past. The hyphenated form of the name of the perceived "Empire", however, does not occur in written sources until the 1920's. The written sources of the recent past were streamlined to become understandable and fit into the demands of the literary world. The oral information, which was still remembered by a few consulted knowledgeable elders at the beginning of the 1990's, gives a less consistent impression. Interpreted from within the general picture emerging in this study, the inconsistencies contained in *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro's non-official version justify another time perspective *relevant* to these traditions. Accordingly, the previously proposed chronological baseline for the inception of the *Babiito* dynasty in Bunyoro may be pushed forward at least two centuries, perhaps starting some time by the end of the 17th century.

Isimbwa's "descendants" symbolically represent two generations of *Bacwezi*, in *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro's conflated account roughly discernible as two groups of *Bacwezi*; those in "*Wamara*'s kingdom", associated with the *Bigo* scenario and those in Bukidi (east of Bunyoro), who symbolise the *Babiito* themselves. Luo-speaking elders in Pajule claim common ancestry with the *Bacwezi* in Bukidi epitomised by the name *Cwamali*. This is a name given in Bunyoro, recorded as *Cwa I* or *Cwamali*, the 10th king in the *Babiito* dynastic genealogy. The following conclusion could be drawn from the analysis of sources consulted both among Luo-speaking elders and Banyoro informants: *Cwamali*, 'the true Cutter', won regional recognition to the *Babiito* by the use of the sword *Kitara*. *Cwamali* died and was buried in Rwanda. But in another form, as the "the first *Mucwezi*", *Ndahura* (most probably derived from *ku-huura*, 'to raid cattle'), *Cwamali* returned to the soil of the land in Bunyoro, the cultural Bantu/Luo borderland. This is the environment, where spirits, *Bacwezi*, are believed to inhabit important hills ritually invoked by *Basazima* priests in shrines crucial to *Babiito* identity and history.

The founding tradition/myth of the *Kibandwa wa Ngobya* priesthood establishment in the *Babiito* hierarchy is linked to no other king than *Omukama Cwa I*. The tradition is transferred by the incumbent priest of the shrine at the foot of the *Ngobya* Hill. It is the abode of the *Mucwezi Ngobya*, a name alluding to the place, where *Cwamali*'s spiritual adaptation, the *Omucwezi Ndahura*, arrived. At a specific time of crisis, revealed by the presence of a huge snake, *Isingoma*, 'the elder twin brother', is said to have mediated divine healing and blessing from the first owners of the soil to *Omukama Cwa I*. From then on *Isingoma* was transformed from *omufumo*, 'diviner, healer' to *Kibandwa*, 'The Great Medium', of the *Babiito* kings.

The *Kibandwa* priest/medium and his group praise *Nyinamwiru*, 'Mother of the commoner', known as *Ndahura*'s "mother", whom Kinyoro traditions identify as *Nyina Omukama*, 'the Mother of the Head Milker'. Called upon by commoners and kings alike, *Nyinamwiru* and the "white" *Bacwezi* spirits are expected to purify, *kweza*, homesteads, villages and the entire kingdom from all evil in any form. *Nyinamwiru*

is magnified as the Mother with one big breast, *Ow'ekibele kimoi*, 'the one who breast-fed the warriors, who went on a mission and came back victorious', *Ayonkeze abatabaazi n'abatabaaruki*. This poetic expression in the deepest sense transfers the message that the Bunyoro "centre of creation" and the so-called "Kitara Empire" of the *Bacwezi* is not to be regarded merely in secular terms of an old state defined by physical boundaries. The word *abatabaazi*, 'soldiers', is semantically associated with the *rukale* term for royal burial, *okutabaaza*, variations of which are extant in all the three Great Lakes Bantu successor languages. The word testifies to a system of kingship ideology of expansion transcending human time and space. In Rwanda the ideology of expansion, *gutabaara*, was centred on the heroic act of the king himself, "to go to war and expand the kingdom by shedding his blood". The *Banyiginya* dynasty in Rwanda does not claim any link to the *Bacwezi* ancestors, nevertheless the role model for the *gutabaara* expansion ideology appears to be *Ndahura*, the first *Mucwezi* of the *Babiito*. This conclusion could be substantiated by evidence contained in the Milk Test traditions accounted for in the previous chapter. The Milk Test traditions also clarify the *Babiito* origin of the royal title *Omukama*.

The Luo-speaking Pajule in Acholi recognise two levels of kingship, political and spiritual. They expose shared cultural traits with Bunyoro in oral traditional, ritual and symbolic associations. Regarded in its specific context emanating from "the Bunyoro centre of creation", the paramount role of Lagoro spiritual kingship appears as a product of shared beliefs and perceptions pertaining to the Bantu/Luo borderland culture. The Luo name for the king *Cwa Mera* in Acholi is proof of the common *Bacwezi* kingship ideology, which associates to *Isimbwa*'s descendant *Kyomya* and "his son" *Kato Kimera*. In Kinyoro records *Isingoma Rukidi* sent *Kato Kimera* to Buganda with the purpose of securing growth and stability. Kingship ideology documented for Pajule exhibits rituals and symbolism associated with the material culture of the bark-cloth tree, said to have originated in Bunyoro. But instead of adopting the Runyoro term *omutoma* they borrowed the Luganda word *omutuba* to verbalise their administrative office

of kingship: *Rwot Kitupa*. The Luganda loanword in Central Luo-speaking peoples' language confirms the regional pattern of *kutabaaza* expansion ideology emanating from "the Bunyoro centre of creation". *Kitupa* serves as evidence of a late Buganda involvement in expansion activities and warfare.

In a wider context of Rutara speech communities, the persona *Isimbwa* appears as a useful symbol in explaining the form of the *Bacwezi* religious innovation. In this matter the multi-level concept of *Isimbwa* symbolises the process of social change, whereby foreigners like immigrants and war captives were assimilated into the social system of "the Kitara complex". Hence the mechanism for assimilating strangers into the clan system constituted the model for the form of the new *Bacwezi* belief pattern. Consequently the *Bacwezi* were perceived as foreigners, readily accepted and adopted as guardian spirits of resident clans. This conclusion could be reached by the help of Hultkrantz' religio-ecological approach in combination with Buchanan's (1969) research results from "the Kitara complex" compared to my fieldwork sources collected in Karagwe, Buhaya and among the Banyankore.

Unfortunately, scholars who hitherto have dealt with the *Bacwezi* problem and worked from the perspective of the profane scientific world, be they Africans or Western, have often misunderstood the complex interaction between the material and the immaterial world. The new evidence presented in this chapter has shown that the *Bacwezi* mediumship cult may have emerged as a new belief pattern, which arose in response to the expectations of the Banyoro in a specific situation of crisis and affliction. Information contained in clan histories collected by Buchanan (1969:14) as well as in my sources generally agree that the cult was not perceived as an introduction of "the Bacwezi themselves". Neither did any *Bacwezi* rulers make themselves into *embandwa* (Berger 1981:45) or institute the cult of *Wamara* (Mulokozi 1987:31). Nor did the movement arise as the result of any concerted efforts of innovative mediums (Schoenbrun 1998:125, following Tantala 1989).

The evidence from within "the religious vision of the world" confirms the understanding held by the missionary E. Johanssen (1925:9): The [*Bacwezi*] spirits revealed themselves to their chosen mediums, who experienced an irresistible calling to serve the spirit and convey its messages. As has previously been shown, spirits of dead leaders are not expected to enter into the shape of powerful beasts in the social environment of the Luo. The new religious movement arose in the Luo/Bantu borderland of Bunyoro, when the spirit fell on its medium of a local clan. The *Bacwezi* perceived as a human dynasty were not Luo (contra Crazzolara 1937:15), but the specific feature of *Bacwezi* spirit mediumship may have originated as a Luo legacy to Great Lakes culture.

Thus responding to the faith of "his" subjects the spirit of the *Mubiito* warrior king *Cwamali* returned home in the form of the first *Mucwezi Ndahura*. If the first *Mucwezi Ndahura* here is interpreted as a religious adaptation of *Cwamali*, it is reasonable to suggest that the perception of a *Bacwezi* dynasty, who after death became *Bacwezi* spirits, originated as a projection of the *Babiito* invaders. In other words, the *Bacwezi* were *Babiito*, in the present chapter identified as a second group of *Bacwezi*: "the *Bacwezi* in *Bukidi*". A knowledgeable Munyoro elder said that the *Babiito* were strangers passing through *Bukidi*.

Hence, the perception of foreignness inherent to the understanding of the *Bacwezi* could have been moulded on the experience of the *Babiito* invasion. Perhaps *Bahuma* herdsmen accompanied the *Babiito* foreigners. Following the overall interpretations of the sources presented in the previous chapter it is reasonable to suggest that the *Babiito* court ideologists applied the *Bahuma* terminology for specialised herders to include the aristocratic group of clans who supported the new dynasty. Previous research had suggested that the backbone of *Babiito* support derived from iron-working clans of the Central Sudanic substratum in the Luo/Bantu borderlands. The *Basuuli* diviners belong to this group, of whom 'the Second Twin', *Karongo Omukonda*, attains special prominence. His office emerges as a name-sake of the *-kondo* crown metaphor embracing the twofold socio-economic power-base of long-horned cattle, *enkondo*, and advanced metallurgy, *-ondo*, 'hammer'.

Building on kingship symbolism originating from the Monkey totem people with special reference to Karagwe and Buganda, it is worthy to note that the word *ekondo*, crown, occurs in no other language but Runyoro. The crown is provided with long white hair from the *colobus* monkey, extending as a beard from the chin of its wearer (cf. picture). The Central Sudanic root of *ekondo* strengthens the argument that the *Babiito* relied on the support of the mentioned iron-working clans.

The *Bakwonga* is another clan possibly rooted in the same Central Sudanic substratum. At the burial shrine of *Omukama* Kabalega *Bakwonga* daughters, given as wives, *abago*, to the *Babiito Abakama*, perpetuate New Moon fertility rituals, *okwotera*, 'to perfume her body'. Among other duties it is her task to keep *Omukama*'s milk-pot *orubindi*, made of clay. The term has perhaps originated among Bantu-speaking manufacturers of Urewe ware.[192] The *Bamooli*, who ought to be included in the same group of aristocratic clans, have a reputation as being the best black-smiths of the *Babiito*. They keep the most important *Bacwezi* shrine centre in the old kingdom of *Bwera* in Masaka Hill, primarily dedicated to *Wamara*.

This is the *Wamara Mucwezi*, said to have completed (*ku-mara*) the "Empire" of the *Babiito*. The *Basingo* clan in Karagwe has adopted *Wamara Rusingo* as their clan spirit, an appellation that refers to the cursed *Musingo* ancestor, who finished off cattle and kingship at *Bigo*. With the overall motive of peace-making and prosperity for present and coming generations the memory of "his" destructive impact had to be reversed. Evidence accounted for previously and in this chapter has shown that the *Omucwezi Wamara*, "the last *Mucwezi*" of the *Babiito*, is praised as *Omukama w'Abaranzi*, "King of Kings and Spirits", superior to all the *Abakama* in Rutara-speaking people's kingdoms and controller of *embandwa* mediums/spirits. Victorious titles, regalia and special vocabulary expressed in derivations of the verb *-singa*, 'prevail', comprise *Bacwezi* kings and *embandwa* mediums alike. *-singa* is Kinyankore, while Runyoro has *-singura* (Davis 1938/1952:281). For Luhaya Bona-Baisi (1960:171) annotates the verb *-siinga* explained by the synonym *kukiza amani*, in other words 'to overpower', which

means 'to win'. But "the term *amani* is of Arabic origin and belongs to the history reconstructed a long time after the course of events took place and is necessarily described by means of the modern linguistic usage with many loanwords".[193] Nevertheless, continuity from the remote past is symbolically enshrined in the name given to the beadwork pattern adorning "the Royal Crown of the Nyoro-Kitara", *ensingo* (Trowell and Wachsmann 1953:209, Plate 50G).

Consequently, the *Bacwezi* concept of kingship does not only refer to the name of a perceived dynasty in the remote past to whom the *Babiito* connect themselves for legitimacy. It is also to be understood as a system of kingship of political and spiritual power exercise deeply intertwined. The main purpose of the *Bacwezi* system is summarised in the specific term for peace, *businge/busingye*, deeply rooted in the Rutara-speaking people's history in the remote past.

Endnotes

1 Nyakatura (Aspects of Banyoro Customs and tradition, 1970:17) writes that Nyangoma could be translated 'mother of the drum.' It is the name given to the eldest twin girl to mark the special status of twin-ship. For Buganda Ray (1972:37) associates the idea of twin-ship with royalty.

2 Acknowledgements to Prof. Tibamanya Mwene Mushanga for this translation, given by telephone communication from Kabwohe, Bushenyi, Uganda 7/5/2005.

3 Banyankore informants (*Bahima*) relate that *Isimbwa*'s union with *Nyabiryo* is incestuous. Regarding the *Bacwezi* literally as human beings they say that "*Isimbwa* begot *Kyomya* from his own sister" (information from Joshua Muwumba in Kampala 1986 and then in Nyabushozi, Mbarara District from Mzee I. Katuuka, BFFM:579, 1992).

4 For an "Episodic summary of the Kitara epic" containing the *Bacwezi* traditions told according to the sequence of what I have called "the regional standard version", see Tantala (1989:5-9).

5 Schoffeleers wrote two articles for the volume *The Historical Study of African Religion* (1972), edited by Ranger and Kimambo. One of these dealt with "The history and Political Role of the M'Bona cult among the Mang'anja" (1972:73-94).

6 Quotation from Ranger (1974:9) in Berger and Buchanan's article "The Cwezi Cults and the History of Western Uganda" in ed. Joseph T. Gallagher, *East African Culture History*, 1976:45.

7 Webster (1979a:2-3) accounted for the main principles of dating that have been applied for research among both Bantu- and Luo-speaking peoples in the interlacustrine region. These are a combination of the 27 years to a dynastic generation principle first suggested by Oliver, tie-in with references between the various dynastic lists as well as eclipses reported in traditions. For a source critical overview of methods and problems pertaining to chronology and dating see Michael Twaddle's (1975) far-reaching article entitled "Towards an early history of the East African interior".

8 I am grateful to Lena Roos, whose (2003) research strategy for Jewish historiography inspired me to distinguish between "various pasts" that can be discernible in my interlacustrine oral as well as written source material. She was guided by Joseph H. Yerushalmi's work on *Jewish*

History and Jewish memory. He (1983:34) saw the distant past as the past that was *relevant* to the Jewish present during the Middle Ages. Special acknowledgements extended to Stefan Schreiner, Tubingen, who clarified this matter with regard to my own specific research context (Uppsala, 19/5 2003).

9 This is according to Buchanan's (1974:131) sources (Bikunya 1927:16-21 and Nyakatura 1947:3-4). Agreeing with the written sources Mzee E.W. Rubale, Tooro, said that *Kyomya* fathered the *Babiito* twin brothers (BFFM:1051, 1992).

10 According to Fisher (1911/1970:111) *Mpuga Rukidi* and *Kato* were huntsmen, whom the *Bacwezi* had seen under a "mubito" tree together with their servants. They were identified as "illegitimate sons of the Mucwezi Isimbwa".

11 Bunyoro: According to *Omubiito* Isaya Karubanga (BFFM:920, 1992) "the wife gave birth under a fruit tree called *Biito* (*omukooge*)". It has been identified as "the sacred balanitis aegypitica tree" (Wright 1940b:197).

12 Bunyoro: *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro, BFFM:889, 1992.

13 *Omukwongakati* Angela Kabasindi, Bunyoro, said that Bukidi was situated in Lango, north of Lake Kyoga. She was herself of the same clan as the mother of the first *Babiito*, the *Bakwonga*, traditionally hailing from Bukidi (BFFN/7:46, 1992). *Omubiito* Isaya Karubanga, Bunyoro (BFFM:920, 1992) and *Mupanyarwa* E.W. Rubaale, Tooro (BFFM:1052, 1992) also said that Bukidi was situated in Lango.

14 Bunyoro: *Omubiito* Isaya Karubanga BFFM:920, 1992.

15 Bunyoro: *Omubiito* Isaya Karubanga, BFFM:921, 1992.

16 Bunyoro: *Omubiito* Isaya Karubanga, BFFM:920, 1992.

17 Bunyoro: *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro, BFFM:889, 1992.

18 Bunyoro: *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro, BFFM:889-890, 1992.

19 Nyakatura (1970:93) mentions *Nyakaranda* as *Ndahura*'s "sister", which means that "she" is regarded as *Isimbwa*'s "daughter". So "she" figures as *Wamara*'s "aunt" in both official and non-official sources.

20 Bunyoro: *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro, BFFM:890, 1992.

21 Lodhi (p.c. 24/8 2007, Uppsala) thinks that *Karongo* should be rendered 'the second twin' meaning a copy of the first twins. It has the same root as Swahili *mwongo* and Old Swahili *mrongo* etc. meaning 'false, pretender, liar' etc.

22 Bunyoro: *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro, BFFM:890, 1992.

23 Bunyoro: *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro, BFFM:893, 1992. *Omubiito* Isaya Karubanga (BFFM:920, 1992) is particular about *Isingoma*'s formal identity as a *Mucwezi* of the *Amalegyo* totem, even before arriving in Bunyoro. Again, the overall concern is to show that the *Babiito* are legitimate heirs to the *Bacwezi*.

24 When highlighting the problem of Luo/Bantu cultural interactions in Bunyoro Southall (1971:391) brought up "the Nilotic Lwoo drum names of the Babiito kings" as well-known examples, "as also are the *mpako* names". The *Mpango* drums are in Luo-speaking people's context termed *Empako* (Adefuye 1976:242-243).

25 Bunyoro: Omucwezikati Y. Kabanyoro, BFFM:890-891, 1992.

26 Bugoma is a name Tantala (1989:xvii) placed on the map she reconstructed for "Kitara during the early Cwezi period". It is located in the present south-western Hoima District.

27 Bunyoro: *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro, BFFM:891, 1992.

28 Ibid.

29 In Nyakatura's (1974:41) version, when the position of the *Bacwezi* in *Kitara* had become intolerable and they saw no way out but to leave, they decided to send for *Kyomya*'s children to come over and rule in their place.

30 Bunyoro: *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro, BFFM:891, 1992.

31 Okot p'Bitek (1971:17) mentioned Chope as a name for Luo-speaking people, *Pa-Luo*, living in Kibanda, the modern county in north-eastern Bunyoro (Masindi District) that appears as the scenario of Bantu/Luo interactions. Tantala (1989:80) gives the Luo place name Pawir in the "north-eastern corner" of Bunyoro as the home of the *Palwo* (*Pa-Luo*).

32 Bunyoro: *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro, BFFM:891-892, 1992.

33 The two incumbent *Basuuli* diviners of the *Babiito* were present at the installation of *Omukama* Solomon Gafabusha Iguru I Amooti, the 27th *Omukama* of the *Babiito*, 11/6 1994 in Hoima. I am grateful to Peter Busomoke, who allowed me to buy a copy of a picture he took at this occasion, showing *Karongo* standing in front carrying the *Omukoro*, while *Nyakooka* carries a white cock, *enkokoromi*.

34 Personal observation at the occasion of the installation of *Omukama* S. Gafabusha Iguru I Amooti in Hoima, 11/6 1994. Acknowledgements to the anonymous German journalist, who invited me to see his video film of this occasion, when I had failed to witness the ritual *in situ*.

35 Bunyoro: *Omusuuli Karongo Omukonda* (BFFM:878, 1992) gave the detail about handing the *omukoro* nine times at the *Mpango*, while *Omubiito* Isaya Karubanga (BFFM:914, 1992) testified to the significant role of *Karongo* at the *Mpango*. *Omubiitokati* M. Burara Atwoki (BFFM:943-944, 1992) stressed that *Omukonda* (*Karongo*) was such an important man in the kingdom that the *Empango* would always proceed to his place and spend a whole day there.

36 *Okujweka*, literally 'to dress', is the Kinyoro (*Omubiitokati* M. Burara, BFFM:941, 1992) and Tooro (*Omusonga* Ibona Sezi, BFFM:1069, 1996) term for royal installation. At the installation of the *Kabaka* of Buganda, Ronald Muwenda Mutebi I on July 31st 1993, the aspect of *kujweka* was important in the first traditional part of the rituals, when the heir was dressed by the *Ssemanobe* king-maker. The latter tied two pieces of bark-cloth, one over each shoulder of the king (personal observation). In Luganda also the word *omukolo* is heard in reference to royal rituals and celebrations.

37 Bunyoro: *Omusuuli Karongo Omukonda*, BFFM:876, 1992. K.W. (1936), the pseudonym used by *Omukama* Sir Tito Winyi IV Gafabusha, does not mention *Karongo* in his detailed description of Kinyoro installation rituals. Instead, it is *Nyakooka* who hands over a stick named *Binyonyo* (K.W. 1936:296).

38 Bunyoro: The explanation *Omusuuli Karongo* gave for the origin of his second name *Omukonda* points to a current Buganda location in geography. Mzee *Karongo* said that his ancestor was born in a place called Kikonda in the present Kiboga district (BFFM:876, 1992). Formerly Kiboga was part of Mubende district, where the main language spoken today is Luganda (Rwabwogo 1994:47-48). At the time relevant for *Omukonda*'s ancestor, Bunyoro territory could have included Kikonda, later given up to Buganda rule.

39 Bunyoro: *Omucwezikati* Y Kabanyoro, BFFM:893, 1992.

40 Bunyoro: *Omumwoolikati* Eseeza Mpirima, BFFM:975, 1992.

41 See Steinhart's (1979:193, endnote 21 and 22) account and statement of the sources he used for his clarification about the pre-colonial and colonial historical developments and geographic extension of the Tooro kingdom.

42 Pajule: Mzee Gwido Latigo Olal, BFFM:1093, 1993, Mr Olanya Eugenio, BFFN/7:148, 1993, Mr Ventorino Too, BFFM:1074, 1993.

43 For an interesting assessment of Luo historiography, see Wrigley, "The Problem of the Lwo" (1981:219-246).

44 Bunyoro: *Omubiito* Isaya Karubanga, BFFM:920, 1992.

45 Webster substantiated this assumption from Onyango-ku-Odongo's (1976) research results, based on Crazzolara's construct of Luo migrations on a large scale (Crazzolara 1937:1-21 and 1960:136-148). In another work Webster (1979:4) admitted that the location of Tekidi is not known. Yet his and Onyango-ku-Odongo's proposed Luo chronology (1976:20) partly rests

on the premise that Tekidi, located somewhere not far from Agoro mountains, had been an early Luo settlement and dispersal centre, possibly from as early as at least a. AD 1000.

46 This was according to the earlier mimeographed version of Nyakatura's *History of Bunyoro-Kitara* edited by G.N. Uzoigwe, p. 52, published as *Anatomy of an African Kingdom* in 1973.

47 Onyango-ku-Odongo quoted the Central Luo oral traditions that his grandmother had told him. Karugire (1978:5) appreciated the fact that Onyango had explicitly stated that he was not going to cite any of the written sources but only the account given to him by his grandmother. That account would not, however, turn out as straightforward as he received it. As Wrigley (1981:227) has remarked, "unfortunately ... he collates it with the results of his reading and of his assiduous enquiries in various parts of the Lwo-speaking world".

48 For a good summary of the origin and spread of jiggers (*Tunga penetrans*) in East Africa see Ford and Hall (1947:18-19).

49 From the 1990's Ugandan political discourse one would learn that the reason for ethnic selection of "Northerners" into the army derived from British colonial policies. In a paper entitled "Acholi and Nubians: Economic Forces and Military Employment" Dennis Pain (1987:41) has called for "a radical reappraisal of the historical military realities of Uganda, and therefore for a positive and progressive answer to the dilemma of an unrepresentative army, rather than a negative populist solution". Unfortunately his hopes for "Acholi reintegration into the mainstream of Uganda's polity and economy" (1987:54) still need to come true.

50 Onyango-ku-Odongo (1976) carefully translated the names mentioned in the account he edited from the traditions told by his grandmother. But one looks in vain for a Luo translation of "Chua". Mzee Paulo Ochaya (BFFM:1098, 1993) of the *Pacwaa* clan in Mucwini village not far from Kitgum town said that *Cwa* is the name of his great ancestor and there is no other meaning of the word.

51 Kiziba: *Omwana* Amelia Mutahangarwa, BFFM:293, 1991.

52 *Nyatworo*'s father has been mentioned as *Labongo* of the *Bakwonga* clan. Webster and Herring (1975:97-107) analysed the repeated incidence of the "extremely common" Central Luo name *Labongo* and its proliferation over space and time. They (1975:98) arrived at the conclusion that the "*bong*" reference in the source material under scrutiny tended to be of Central Sudanic origin.

53 Bunyoro: *Omubiitokati* Masitura Burara Atwoki, BFFM:939-940, 1992.

54 Bunyoro: *Omumwoolikati* E. Mpirima, BFFM:973, 1992. Her name *Mpirima* illustrates the iron working skill of her clan. *Mpirima* means 'dagger', 'dirk' in Runyoro (Davis 1938/1952:97).

55 Tooro: *Omupanyarwa* E.W. Rubaale, BFFM:1036, 1992.

56 In the English version of Nyakatura (1973:16) *kuramya* in Runyoro is translated as 'worship', but in Karagwe I learnt that the same word in Runyambo means 'to greet the king', so I believe that 'worship' is not correct in Runyoro either. Tantala's (1989:553) "pay homage" is more suitable here.

57 Bunyoro: Rev. Father Charles Nkende, BFFN/7:36, 1992.

58 Tooro: *Omupanyarwa* E.W. Rubaale, BFFM:1045, 1992.

59 Then he sent her fruits and flowers, *kasekera* (*lantana trifolia*) and *enseko y'ensi*, literally 'country laughter' (*kyllinga albiceps*) (Beattie 1971:46), as a sign of love, promising to come back to her. In Karagwe I observed how the white flowers of *enseko y'ensi* "made the earth laugh" after the first rains of the season.

60 Bunyoro: *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro, BFFM:887-889, 1992.

61 Comment by McMaster, Nov. 2001.

62 Tooro: *Omupanyarwa* E.W. Rubaale, BFFM:1045-1046, 1992.

63 *Bukuku* wanted to kill the child but his advisors decided that he should be thrown into the river Nguse. *Omupanyarwa* E.W. Rubale (Tooro) specified the River Nguse situated in Bunyoro, forming the boundary between Hoima and Kibale districts.

94 The *rukale* (royal) term *okutahya*, 'to die', could be found in Kiziba (*Omwana Amelia Mutahangarwa*, BFFM:228, 1989), Karagwe (Kinyanyengoma Bachorobekwa, BFFM:83, 1991, Mzee J. Kakuba, BFFN/4:32, 1991), Ihangiro (Rev. S. Machumu, BFFM:386, 1991), Rujumbura (Mzee Philemon Kitaburaza and Rev. Can. I. Ndihimbirwe, BFFM:673, 1992) and Igara (Mzee G.W. Binyindo, BFFM:83, 1992). The latter gave the literary translation: *Omukama atahize*, 'the king has brought his cows home'. So did Mzee R. Mutembei for Kyamutwara: *kutahya*, 'to bring the herds home' (BFFN/5:125, 1992).

95 In Karagwe my experience of Ahakishaka village life taught me that marriage, especially to the young girls, could be regarded as a *rite de passage*.

96 Bunyoro: Venance Byaruhanga, BFFM:992, 1992. *Bantu bakwera* means both 'good' and 'white' people, but has nothing to do with race or skin colour. *Kwera* simply refers to the cleanliness of the heart and is also used by Rutara-speaking peoples in the context of holiness (cf. Beattie 1961:13).

97 The *Kibandwa wa Musaija Mukuru* is the leader (father) of all the spirits in all the clans in Bunyoro. During the civil war he led prayers and sacrifice of a goat on top of Musaija Mu-kuru Hill for the current leader (President Museveni) to overthrow the bad elements in the former regime (*Kibandwa wa Musaija Mukuru* U. Kamanyire BFFM:1014-1015, 1992).

98 Bunyoro: U. Kamanyire, BFFM:1016, 1992.

99 Bunyoro: U. Kamanyire, BFFM:1013, 1992. According to John Beattie's (1964:141) Bany-oro informants, "*etete*" 'lemon grass' is used in small spirit shrines dedicated to *embandwa* spirits only, not for spirits of individual *emizimu*.

100 Bunyoro: U. Kamanyire, BFFM:1016, 1992. The Karuzika tomb of Omukama Kabarega at Mparo in Bunyoro is also built with two doorways, *emilyango ibili* (BFFN/7:43, 1993).

101 Tooro: Information obtained at the occasion of the *okutabaaza*, royal burial of *Omukama* Kaboyo Olimi III of Tooro, 4/9 1995.

102 At a time when Ray's book had become available in Uganda, I heard one of the guides at the royal burial shrine Kasubi Tombs in Kampala telling this tradition, evidently re-using Ray's information.

103 Bunyoro: *Kibandwa wa Musaija Mukuru*, U. Kamanyire, BFFM:1017, 1992.

104 When the Ngobya spirit fell on the 12th December 1990, the *Babiito* had sent a drum and a bark-cloth for it (Kibandwa Venance Byaruhanga, BFFM:992, 1992).

105 Bunyoro: Kibandwa wa Ngobya, BFFM:995, 1992.

106 I am grateful to Abdulaziz Lodhi, who helped me with this translation, Uppsala, 29/4 2003.

107 Adyeri is one of the twelve traditional praise names or mpako of Nilotic origin. The real meaning of these names is usually not known to the Bantu-speakers. The Luo-speaking Mr Onyango Odongo said that Adyeri means 'sacrificial lamb'.

108 To breast-feed or 'suckle', *kw-onkya* (Runyoro), kw-ontsya (Runyankore) (Davis 1938/1952:312).

109 *Kibandwa wa Ngobya*, Venance Byaruhanga, BFFM:1002, 1992. My acknowledgement for this translation goes to Mr Francis Katana, Ugandan Embassy, Copenhagen, telephone communication 30/3 2000. *Kutabaaruka*, Runyoro: 'return from fighting', 'return from visiting the king' (Davis 1938/1952:166), Runyankore: 'return from the capital, return safely' (Taylor 1959:77).

110 Kibandwa wa Ngobya, Venance Byaruhanga, BFFM:1004, 1992.

111 *Kibandwa wa Ngobya*, Venance Byaruhanga, BFFM:1005-1006, 1992.

112 Beattie (1961:30), who studied the *embandwa* spirit mediumship cult in Bunyoro, stressed "the cult's dramatic and cathartic aspects" as very important. For more details see Beattie (1964:147).

113 In the context of the Baganda I have shown that the *emisambwa* clan spirits, linked to the first owners of the soil, are believed to be "human beings born in a different way": The Muganda elder exemplified this belief by saying that "there are those who are born with one eye, one ear, one breast".

114 Information from Ma Kambabaze, who added that *Mugasha's* wife was *Nyakagoro*, the daughter of Kagoro (Notes from Karagwe I:138, 1975).
115 Bunyoro: Omucwa Ausi Rwakaikara, BFFM:955, 1992.
116 For Rwanda: Rev. Mpyisi, BFFM:755, 759 and Rose Mukande, *Mujawingoma*, BFFM:768-69, 779-80.
117 The interlacustrine royal self-sacrifice here accounted for deserves to be considered within another general theoretical framework than "the divine kingship", rooted in the Hamitic hypothesis.
118 Nyakatura (1973:73, endnote 19) mentioned the following Rwandan sources: Pagès 1933, Vansina 1962 and 1966 and Kagame 1958.
119 It is important to take note of the fact that the hyphenated form Bunyoro-Kitara does not occur in the sources until the 1930's. Tantala (1989:x) wrote that "it was used [...] in a series of articles about the kingdom's pre-colonial history written for the *Uganda Journal* by Omukama (King) Tito Winyi Gafabusa [K.W.]. For Winyi and other Banyoro intellectuals and politicians this name emphasized that the precolonial kingdom had been much larger than Bunyoro District to which the kingdom was confined during the colonial period".
120 Cf. Grant's (1864:XVI) note about Kittara, "a province to the west of Uganda"; Uganda should be understood as Buganda.
121 The son of the late heir to the throne of Kianja, Buhaya, Mr Mujuni Byabato, said that according to his elders Kitara was the name of an area north of the Kagera River, in present Tanzania, now named Missenye. But to the people of Kianja, the pre-colonial Kitara extended beyond Missenye covering the southern part of Uganda, but not Buganda (BFFM:333-334, 1991).
122 Kiziba: Mwalimu Y. Makora, BFFN/5:138, 1992.
123 Kiziba: Rev. E. Lutashobya, BFFM:316, 1992.
124 Bunyoro: Omukonda Karongo, BFFN/7:21, 1992, Mulindwa and Kagoro 1968/1971:9, Beattie 1971:109 and Davis 1938/1952:166.
125 Davis 1938/1952:166.
126 Davis 1938/1952:115.
127 Davis 1938/1952:166.
128 Tooro: BFFM:1062, 1995.
129 Nkore: Mzee George W. Katondwaki, BFFM:553, 1992.
130 Taylor 1959:77.
131 Taylor 1959:10.
132 Taylor 1959:77.
133 Taylor 1959:10.
134 Rujumbura: Mzee Ph. Kitaburaza and Rev. Can. I. Ndihimbirwe, BFFN/6:70.
135 Karagwe: Ta P. Kapele, BFFM:101, 1991.
136 Karagwe: Ta P. Kapele, BFFN/4:25, 1991.
137 Karagwe: Mzee Warwo, BFFM:5, 1989.
138 For Buhaya in general Bona-Baisi has kutabaara, 'go to war'.
139 Kyamutwara: *Omukama* E. Rukamba, BFFN/2:20, 1991.
140 Kianja: Rev. M. Lutosha, BFFN/5:63, 1991.
141 Kianja: Rev. M. Lutosha.
142 Rwanda: Rev. Mpyisi, BFFM:745, 1992, *Umugungakazi*, BFFM:852, 1992.
143 Rwanda: Rev. Mpyisi, BFFM:745, 1992, *Umugungakazi*, BFFM:852, 1992.
144 Pagès 1933:515.
145 Pagès 1933:515.
146 Snoxall 1967:302.
147 Personal information from David Kyobe, Uppsala 2001.
148 Snoxall 1967:302.

149 Personal information from Elly Tuhirirwe-Tumwine, Kampala, 22/4 2001. All the symbols the Banyankore use as decorations in their houses are accredited to the *Bahima*, but in accordance to the general picture emerging in this study it seems to me that they are older than the inception of the *Bahima*/*Bairu* class distinction.

150 Pajule: Mzee Fidele Lodi, BFFM:1091, 1993.

151 Pajule: The clan's spokesman, Ventorino Too, BFFM:1075, 1993.

152 Fidele Lodi could give the names of 28 clans under Lagoro spiritual rule (BFFM:1092, 1993).

153 Pajule: G.L. Olal, BFFM:1093-1094, 1993.

154 Pajule: G.L. Olal, BFFM:1094, 1993; Ventorino Too, BFFM:1078, 1993; Banarba Onek, BFFM:1103, 1993; Pacwaa clan: Mzee Paulo Ochaya, BFFM:1096, 1993.

155 Pajule: Ventorino Too, BFFM:1076, 1993.

156 Pajule: Mzee G.L. Olal, BFFM:1095, 1993.

157 Nkore: Mzee I. Katuuka, BFFM:603, 1992.

158 The grammatically correct form would be *emizimu*, but *bazimu* was heard in reference to the *Bacwezi*.

159 Karagwe: Information from Ma Maria Kambabazi (Notes from Ahakishaka 1975:86). Another Ahakishaka neighbour, Ta Matayo Rwemburara, who was literate but had been an *enanga*-player at Rumanyika's court, held the same view (Notes from Ahakishaka 1975:30).

160 Ihangiro: Rev. S. Machumu, BFFM:364, 1991.

161 Ihangiro: Rev. S. Kahakwa, BFFM:389, 1991.

162 *Kakara ka Shagama* is the famous diviner in *Bahinda*-ruled kingdoms (for the Banyankore see Katate and Kamugungunu 1955, Vol. 1:20 and Rev. J.W. Kashaka BFFM:608, 1992). In the Kagera region the expression *eira lya Kakara*, 'long ago, at the time of *Kakara* [*ka Sha-gama*]' would be mentioned as a reference to something that happened a very long time ago (information obtained at the seminar about the *Bacwezi* for pastors and lay people of the ELCT in Bukoba, 7-8 October 1992).

163 Nkore: Bacwezi language, Kinyankore glosses within brackets: *ehongwa* (ente), 'cow'; *amasharaka (amata)*, 'milk', *ebihuuna (ebitookye)*, 'bananas'; *obutongye (oburo)*, 'millet'; *okukorotana (okuruwana)*, 'fighting'; *okukoroga (okukama)*, 'milking'; *amainamura (amaizi)*, 'water'; *amakangya (amarwa)*, 'beer' (Mzee I. Katuuka, BFFM:572, 1992).

164 Nkore: Mzee I. Katuuka, BFFM:572-573, 1992.

165 Karagwe: Information from Ma Kambabazi (notes from Karagwe I, 1975:137-138) and Ma Kyabona (Notes from Ahakishaka 1975:139-140).

166 Personal information from Mwambutsya Ndebesa, lecturer at the History Department, Makerere University, (February 1989) and interview with Mzee P. Kirindi (BFFM:634, 1992).

167 In my view Mulokozi's (1987:30) conclusion that the Bacwezi were a pastoral lineage of the *Baranzi* clan who rose to power in Bunyoro around 1300 A.D. can be refuted, because the clan reference Baranzi for Bukuku must be regarded as a piece of spiritual creativity of the *Babiito* "myth-makers" to safe-guard their own legitimacy. They had to explain the emergence of *Ndahura*, but could not hide the truth for posterity. When translated, the secret is unfolded in the meaning of the name *Abaranzi*. For Runyankore Davies (1938/1952:144) has *-ranzya* as a transitive verb, 'look at a distant object'. Rev. S. Machumu in Ihangiro said that *abaranzi*/*abarangi* refer to the prophets (BFFM:406, 1991). Thus the perception of looking at a distant object was applied for the spiritual world. The Baranzi are a clan in Bunyoro (H.K. Karubanga 1948), a fact that does not preclude the *Bukuku* clan reference to be purely symbolic, reflecting on Kinyoro spirituality.

168 To the Bahaya *Igara*, situated in the Bushenyi district in south western Uganda, is renowned as a famous centre for spirit mediumship: *Igara lya Kabuura, mbali baragura boona, batashaba na mikimba*, '*Igara of Kabuura*, where they all do divination without asking for fees'. Personal

information from Dr M. Mulokozi, Institute of Kiswahili Research, Dar-es-Salaam, November 1991.

169 Kyamutwara: *Omukama* E. Rukamba, BFFM:181, 1991. *Omukama* E. Rukamba's ruling clan is the *Bankango*, who usurped the *Bahinda* around 1700 (Cory 1949:192).

170 Kiziba was the only kingdom in Buhaya ruled by a *Babiito* royal line from Bunyoro.

171 Karagwe: When I was a missionary in Ahakishaka I gave my friend Ma Kyabona, the *embandwa*, an efficient medicine against her reoccurring headaches. As a result she started to come to church. Likewise, when a roaming lion was killed in our garden thanks to the fact that we had the use of a car, our neighbour was convinced that Jesus was a much more powerful God than the one of his ancestors, so he decided to get baptised.

172 Kianja: Rev. E. Lutashobya, BFFM:313, 314, 1991.

173 It appears that the Bahaya as well as the Banyambo (Karagwe) understand the geographical location of "Ankole" to be connected to Bunyoro. In Karagwe I came across the place name reference Ankole ya Bunyoro, 'Ankole of Bunyoro', indicating that *Ankole* was under Bunyoro (information from the *embandwa* Ma Kyabona, Ahakishaka, Karagwe 18/5 1976).

174 Ihangiro: Rev. S. Machumu, BFFM:364, 400, 1991.

175 Nkore: Mzee G.W. Katondwaki, BFFM:554, 1992.

176 Information from Rev. E. Lutashobya, Seminar on the Bacwezi, 7-8/10 1992. Rev. Lutashobya would have inherited the position as High Priest and *Embandwa ya Wamara* in Kiziba from his paternal uncle, if he had not chosen to follow his Christian calling to serve the church.

177 Out of eight clans investigated, whose members lived in Ahakishaka and neighbouring villages in the 1970's, five would traditionally keep Wamara as their clan spirit, according to the clan list in Cory and Hartnoll (1945).

178 Ma Bachorobekwa, *Kinyanyengoma*, 'Drum sister' in Karagwe, BFFM:64, 1991.

179 Evidence from Karagwe (Ma Kyabona 1976) shows that the *embandwa* had to experience the ultimate calling from *Wamara* before initiation into the *kubandwa* spirit mediumship cult. Rev. S. Machumu, Ihangiro, said that the Bacwezi spirits were believed to act under control of Wamara (BFFM:410, 1991).

180 Cf. "The earliest history of Bukoba" with notes and annotations by Hans Cory, EAF Cory Papers, No. 79, Africana Section, University Library, Dar-es-Salaam (Manuscript by hand).

181 In Karagwe Ta J. Kakuba expressed the greatness of *Wamara* in the following way: *Yamalaga ebibi omunsi*, 'he finishes all evil on earth' (BFFM:123, 1991). The revivalists, abarokole, in the Kagera region and beyond would say that *Yesu yamara*, 'Jesus is enough', he has finished everything needed for their salvation, thus transferring the old belief in *Wamara* into new forms. Omukama E. Rukamba, Kyamutwara, stressed the greatness of *Wamara*: "If people could have known how to write, then they would have called him Jesus" (BFFN/2:14).

182 Nkore: Mzee P. Kirindi, BFFM:634, 1992.

183 Bunyoro: Omucwezikati Y. Kabanyoro, BFFM:894, 1992; *Omubiito* Isaya Karubanga, BFFM:906, 1992. *Asingiire* means that the king sits on the throne (Omusuuli Karongo Omukonda, BFFM:876, 1992). Buhaya: *Isheichwe asingiire omu iguru* in the Lord's Prayer is the Luhaya translation of 'Our Father who art in heaven' (Empoya 1975:203).

184 I managed to get confirmation that the term *ekisingo* is generally used for the crown of the *embandwa/emandwa* spirit mediumship cult in the following old kingdoms: Karagwe: Ma Kambabaze, Ahakishaka 1978, Kiziba: Rev. E. Lutashobya, Seminar on the Bacwezi, Bukoba, 7-8/10 1992, Nkore: Mzee I. Katuuka, BFFM:572, 1992, Bunyoro: Kibandwa wa Musaija Mukuru, BFFM:1015, 1992, Rujumbura: Mzee L. Mishambi, BFFM:687, 1992, Igara: Mzee Benedicto K. Mubangizi, BFFM:653, 1992.

185 Information from Ma Kambabazi, in Karagwe 1978, Omukama E. Rukamba, Kyamutwara (BFFM:153, 1989) and Rev. E. Lutashobya, Kiziba (BFFN/3:31, 1991).

64 Bunyoro: *Omubiitokati* M. Murara *Atwoki* (BFFN/7:61) described the *orubindi*, sing. of *emindi*, which is the local term for the clay milk pot Trowell and Wachsmann (1953:125, Plate 22:H.) annotate as "Chief's milk bowl", without any reference to its Runyoro word. No roulette-decorated pattern is indicated here. McMaster believed that the term *-bindi*, clay pot' could have been used by makers of Urewe wares (p.c. emails 1999). Table 2 lists the term *-bindi* among the names for pots she proposes could have been used by makers of Urewe wares. A picture I took of *Omukama* Kabalega's grave at Mparo Tombs, Hoima, shows the king's milk bowl, *orubindi*, covered by a cone-formed plaited lid. Exposing a shared material culture, in the context of the former *Babiito*-led kingdom of Kiziba a similar type of lid is termed *omweya* (*Omwana* Amelia Mutahangarwa, BFFM:298, 1989).

65 In Bunyoro the *ekisahi* is a wooden milk container described with a wooden lid (*Omubiitokati* M. Murara *Atwoki*, BFFN/7:61, 1992). For Kiziba *Omwana* Amelia Mutahangarwa (BFFM:289, 1989) mentioned the term *ekishahi* naming the wooden milk-pot in which special women (*abahimakazi*) served the king his milk. The *ekishahi* described in Kiziba is equipped with a spiked handle at the base, a trait that Trowell and Wachsmann (1953:114, Plate 17, H, a, b, d) found in for example Bunyoro, Buzinza, Ukerewe and Kiziba.

66 Bunyoro: *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro, BFFM:888, 1992.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

69 From the interlacustrine perspective it was quite natural to believe that the first Europeans were the *Bacwezi* who had returned (see Williams 1935:198, note 8). Therefore Berger's (1980:66) explanation that the assumptions about an ancient white-skinned *Bacwezi* dynasty derived from European misunderstandings of such statements is out of place.

70 Bunyoro: *Omucwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro, BFFM:889, 1992.

71 Acknowledgements to D. Mwabula-Lubandi for translation of the name, Uppsala, 1999.

72 Bunyoro: *Omuchwezikati* Y. Kabanyoro.

73 Tooro: *Omupanyarwa* E.W. Rubaale, BFFM:1046, 1992.

74 *La Bita* means 'a person who deceives'. Personal information from Mr Lucas Jeremiah Opira, Växjö, 1977.

75 Okot p'Bitek (1971:7) took note of the fact that *Kitara* is a very common name among the Central Luo. On morphological grounds the etymology of the name *Kitara* appears as Bantu. It is derived from a verb, *-tara*, one of its meanings in Runyoro alluding to joyful dancing or 'reel' (Davis 1938/1952:168), in Runyankore translated as 'gambol' (Taylor 1959:78). Associations of satisfaction is contained in the Runyankore noun *kitara*, 'granary'. However, in a study entitled *Oriental Influences in Swahili. A Study in Language and Culture Contacts*, Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, Abdulaziz Y. Lodhi (2000:184) has shown that the Kiswahili noun *kitara* (*vitara*), 'a short curved Indian sword, scimitar', 'surgeon's knife', is an oriental loanword derived from Persian *qidarah*, in Gujuratti and Hindi: *kitar*. More research is needed to find out the origins and exact migration routes of the "foreigners" whom the Banyoro called *Babiito*. The latter must have brought the *kitara* sword into the region.

76 Pajule: Mzee Paulo Ochaya, BFFM:1098, 1993.

77 The Runyoro verb *-tara*, 'form battery array', (Davis 1938/1952:168) testifies to the military activities of the Banyoro.

78 According to *Karongo Omukonda* (BFFM:881, 1992) the sword *Ekitara* later was termed *Empirima*.

79 Tooro: *Mupanyarwa* E.W. Rubaale, BFFM:1048, 1992.

80 Bunyoro: *Omucwezi* Jesse Ndahura, BFFM:900, 1992.

81 For *Cwamali's Romomamahanga* name see K.W. (1935:155), and Nyakatura (1973:58). According to *Omumwoolikati* E. Mpirima, (BFFM:974, 1992), the *Mucwezi Ndahura* was praised *Kyarubimba*, 'of the potter', *Rwesakaaramyambi*, 'someone who had been covered with arrows and

yet survived them' (Nyakatura 1970:66), *Romomahanga*. The latter is an abbreviated form of *Rumoma mahanga*. *Ru-moma* must be derived from *kumooma*, 'spread about, wander' (Davis 1938/1952:95) and *mahanga* means 'nations' in Runyoro (Davis 1938/1952:89). Nyakatura (1973:21) recorded *Rusoma Mahanga* as one of *Ndahura*'s names.

82 Karagwe traditions relate that during the reign of Kalemera Bwiragenda, whose rule Katoke (1975:139) calculated to around 1750, Banyoro forces under *Cwamali* invaded the country and occupied it for six years (1975:44-46).

83 Tooro: *Omupanyarwa* E.W. Rubaale, BFFM:1048, 1992.

84 Tooro: Omupanyarwa E.W. Rubaale said that Kiijura lies in Tooro (BFFM:1038, 1992), a place name found north northeast of Fort Portal on a recent tourist map (Macmillan 2002, 3rd edition). In another statement (BFFM:1047, 1992) Rubaale said that Kiijura is situated in Masindi. The physical existence of a place called Kiijura in both Tooro and Masindi (Bunyoro) was substantiated by the fact that Omucwa Ausi Rwakaikara (BFFM:954, 1992) was interviewed in his home village Kiijura in Masindi.

85 Tooro: Omupanyarwa E.W. Rubaale, BFFM:1048, 1992. Mzee Rubaale was the only Mutooro who had dared to build a house in this area. People thought that this was because he was a Mubiito of the Bapanyarwa subclan and "related" to Ndahura that nothing had happened to him and his family.

86 Nobody was supposed to touch the lime formations, so when the "Commander", the founder of Nakasura Secondary School in the neighbourhood, had not refrained from allowing his students to break some pieces, the following day there came a strong wind that blew the dormitories down. It is said it happened because they had touched "particulars of high importance" (Omupanyarwa E.W. Rubaale, BFFM:1049, 1992).

87 Pajule: Mr Olanya Eugenio, BFFM:1071-1072, 1993 and Ventorino Too, BFFM:1074, 1993. V. Too was the spokesman of the Pajule clan elders. He related this version in the presence of Mr Olanya and 11 elders gathered for the group interview at Oryang. Perhaps Mr Olanya had been influenced by Mr Opira's version aimed at asserting Luo origin for the interlacustrine kingdoms, but going beyond Crazzolara's "Nilotic Hypothesis" (cf. Tantala 1989:14). Mr Dwonga (BFFM:1070A-1070D, 1993), like Opira of the Pacwaa clan, repeated Opira's (Farelius 1978:6) belief that Bacwezi are Cwa, descended from the Ethiopian house of Shoa. This is how Luo-speaking politicians in post-colonial Uganda appear to have twisted the Hamitic hypothesis to their own advantage. Such a message could have spread signals detrimental to the self-perception of a people in northern Uganda, who have suffered from the consequences of civil unrest for two decades.

88 Pajule: Ventorino Too, BFFM:1074, 1993.

89 Bunyoro: Information from the incumbent office keeper of *Kibandwa wa Musaija Mukuru*, 'the priest of the Big Man', Ujensiyo Kamanyire, who said that he is the leader (father) of all the spirits of the clans in Bunyoro (BFFM:1014-1015, 1992).

90 Bunyoro: *Omusuuli Karongo Omukonda*, BFFM:876, 1992.

91 There is also the *Kabamba* cow, either black and white or brown and white. The *Babiito* kings would send Kabamba to the priest of Ngobya for sacrifice (Bunyoro: *Kibandwa wa Ngobya*, Venance Byaruhanga, BFFM:988, 1992).

92 Bunyoro: Venance Byaruhanga, BFFM:986-987, 1992. The following items are necessary for the initiation ceremony, *Ebijwekwa Embandwa: ekisingo*, 'crown', *isanga*, 'ivory', *engoma*, 'drum', *ekibugu*, 'barkcloth', *emiringa*, 'copper bangles', *ente Kabamba*, 'the *Kabamba* cow' and *Ensamazi* lion and leopard skins (BFFM:987, 1992). The Kibandwa wa *Musaija Mukuru*, U. Kamanyire said that the *Ekisingo* crown that is generally used in the kubandwa rituals was made of bark cloth decorated with cowrie shells. In the ancient days they would weave it using *enkindo* leaves from the wild date palm (BFFM:1015, 1992).

93 Information from Karagwe given by Stanislaus Bashungwa, Dar-es-Salaam, July 1986.

186 Igara: Mzee G.W. Binyindo, BFFM:651, 1992.

187 Rujumbura: Mzee Philemon Kitaburaza and Rev. Can. I. Ndihimbirwe, BFFM:671, 1992.

188 Nkore: Mzee Y. Bwirizayo, BFFM:662, 1992.

189 Bunyoro: Karongo Omukonda, BFFM:880, 1992, Omubiito Isaya Karubanga, BFFM:912, 1992 and Omucwa A. Rwakaikara, BFFM:954, 1992.

190 Nkore: Mzee P. Kirindi, BFFM:636, 1992.

191 The *obusinge* concept could no doubt be extended to a wider African context, vital to the same basic existential needs that gave birth to the Truth Commission in South Africa. A similar development is taking place in Uganda, where an Amnesty Commission was established in 2000 under the Ministry of Internal Affairs with the purpose of creating peace and reconciliation (cf. website: www.amnestycom.go.ug). I am grateful to A.-I. Berglund who helped me to fully realise the implications inherent to the key concept *businge* for the overall African context (p.c. in Uppsala 14/7, 2007).

192 This detail is an important piece of evidence, indicating that the king's milkpot in the Bantu/Luo borderland, exposing undercurrent Central Sudanic features, was made of clay. In the southern and south-western areas the *ekyanzi*, 'wooden milk jug', is generally used. In Schoenbrun's (1990:554) estimates *ekyanzi* is derived from **-aandI*. It is a Central Sudanic loanword in Great Lakes Bantu with Madi attestation: *ndre,* 'to milk'. No likely Proto-Bantu source could be found. So in spite of a proposed Central Sudanic factor in both the north and the south, the Munyoro king uses a milk-pot made of clay of possible Bantu origin, not one in wood with a Central Sudanic name. This observation merits further research.

193 P.c. from Lodhi, Uppsala, 24/8 2007.

10
Conclusion

Aware of the fact that myth is the potential bearer of important symbolism to reveal history, I have ventured into the undertaking of a historical interpretation of kingship traditions and/or myths in the Great Lakes region. Combining a historical linguistic approach with the ecology of religion, my analysis has facilitated an interpretation of the symbolism surrounding kingship in the Great Lakes region and thereby elucidating the development of cultural history pertaining to the interlacustrine peoples. While the historical sources describe the cultures of the peoples of the interlacustrine region, this study goes a step further to develop analytic categories using symbolism to interpret and explain the socio-political developments, that previously have been mystified and hence crystallised in theories as the well-known Hamitic theory.

The Hamitic hypothesis was concocted, developed and taught as history with detrimental repercussions to the understanding of the peoples in the region. Born within the theoretical framework and objectives of a regional research organisation, IRREC, this project is a first attempt to correct these misconceptions. On the basis of my previous experience of Karagwe village life, I was given the opportunity to formulate new questions. These had to be posed in relation to a broader group of important elders, who still had a first-hand knowledge of crucial kingship rituals and traditions.

The main source material has developed on the basis of information obtained from elders representing the old Rutara-speaking peoples' kingdoms of Karagwe, Buhaya, Nkore, Tooro and Bunyoro. Relevant comparative data was acquired from the other two Bantu-speaking language groups in the Great Lakes region, most importantly the North Nyanza Baganda as well as the West Highlands Banyarwanda. However, without complementary information obtained from Luo-speaking elders in Kitgum, the picture would have been incomplete.

The sources thus gathered have been processed and analysed in close co-operation with local informants and knowledgeable scholars from a variety of disciplines e.g. history, linguistics, anthropology and religious studies. Written archaeological sources have been consulted.

The concept of "the divine kingship" in Africa was rooted in the epistemological context of the Hamitic theory, which implied that the interlacustrine kings came from the north and were racially superior to the peoples they ruled. The present interdisciplinary study has deconstructed the paradigm of "the divine kingship". Demonstrating that kingship in the Great Lakes region constitutes an organic function inherent to indigenous leadership, it has unfolded aspects of the rich cultural diversity on which centralised rule was built. According to the progress of historical linguistic research (Ehret, Schoenbrun) speakers of two different language phyla (Nilo-Saharan and Afro-Asiatic) have loaned words to the technical skills they taught Bantu-speakers, while social capacity emerges as the decisive factor for Bantu speech to prevail. In this cultural amalgamation we are in possession of convincing data regarding the Central Sudanic linguistic presence.

Mindful of local variations, I have worked on regionally applicable symbolism gained from language and the meaning of words and names. These concepts have been interpreted and appropriated within the perceptual framework of the peoples concerned, namely the presupposition of a continuous interaction between the material and the immaterial world; the visible world of human beings and the invisible world of spirits. In this new multi-faceted dimension of history the kingship symbolism of the white cow illustrates how the visible and the invisible world interact. It also serves as a reminder of the ancient relationships between cattle and human beings. This view is a distinctive feature shared by African societies.

Within the realm of what I have called "the religious vision of the world" the spiritual manifestations are always more important. Perceived to be both immanent and transcendent, the presence of the Creator is indisputable. The belief in the successive order of Creation has guided my interpretation of the historical order of events in the

material world. Accordingly, every new settlement or state-formation is perceived as a new Creation (Vansina). Special reverence, but not worship, is attributed to the spirits of the first settlers in a place, in Buganda mentioned as "the first Creation". These were previously migration groups, who formed the nucleus of clans (Buchanan).

The social framework of the clans arose in close interaction with the natural environment, which also inspired the form of the clan-based belief system (Hultkrantz). Family and clan elders, diviners, priests and other specialists serve as mediators between the visible and the invisible world. So the internal logic of source interpretation in this study is drawn from symbolism pertaining to the clan structure embracing all levels of reality. From within the overall context of the Great Lakes speech communities the clan, not the so-called tribe, emerges as the meaningful social and spiritual reference category of identification. Thus the linguistic and social identities of the people living between the lakes are in no way static.

Highlighting the dynamics of the metaphoric reality, the conceptual name of the white cow takes on varying shapes as history evolves. Historical linguistic evidence of centralised rule is traced to definable locations from the time of "the first Creation", possibly about eighteen hundred years ago or perhaps earlier. In Rwanda *Inka ingabe* names a white cow praised as "the queen of the herd". Derived from the verb *kugabira*, 'to give, distribute', the *-gab-* root of its name expresses and communicates the basic meaning of the leadership function of interlacustrine kingship: the kings' redistribution of the assets of the kingdoms' (Schoenbrun). In this study the symbolism surrounding the *-gab-* kingship of the pioneers (*abatembuzi* in Bunyoro) has been explored in a comparative analysis of regional clan networks bearing the "crowned crane" symbolic identification or totem in relation to the occurrence of the symbolism of "tail-lessness". In Buganda kingship rituals the white cow appears as a "tail-less" bullcalf, *ente enkira*. The definition of "tail-lessness" figures more substantially in the shape of a frog. In Rwanda the *enkira* theme is linked to one of the first-comer clans, who traditionally offered their daughters in marriage to the king,

Umwami. The logic of this practice draws from the regional pattern of creating links for the purpose of legitimacy between later ruling dynasties and the first owners of the soil. Symbolism of motherhood designates also the principle emblem of legitimacy, the sacred kingship drum.

The symbolic shift from a white bull-calf to a white cow has been documented from Buganda, where *Kintu* figures as the explicit Great Ancestor. The Baganda say that *Kintu* came with the "tail" [of the cow], from then on understood in terms of female reproduction. The linguistic evidence validates the development of cattle colour terminology among Rutara- as well as West Highlands-speakers from around 1000 AD. The root of the name of the white cow, *-tare*, fits into this general picture (Schoenbrun).

A comparative investigation of relevant sources from the southern areas of the region, specifically the old *Bahinda*-led kingdom of Karagwe, but also Buhaya and Nkore, reveals that the symbolism of the white cow *Kitare* is ritually associated with the *Abayango/Abayangwe* clan of the Monkey totem. Combined sources indicate that it is the old kingdom of Karagwe that emerges as an ancient power centre of the *Bayango*. This conclusion is supported by the meaning of the name of the Karagwe kingship drum, *Nyabatama*, 'of those whose story came to an end'. On account of the popular belief that the drum embodies the *Omuyango* spirit, there is no doubt that the reference concerns the *Bayango*. Shared in the wider group of southern kingdoms, the common symbolism referred to the white cow *Kitare* reinforces the fundamental ritual importance of the Monkey totem people, in Buganda termed *Enkima*. The entire symbolic complex surrounding this clan substantiates the conclusion that *Kintu* represents the Monkey totem people.

We now turn our attention to the *Bacwezi*, as yet an unresolved scholarly problem in the Great Lakes region. The present analysis using symbolism as analytic categories has advanced new ways to deal with this issue. The earliest reconstructable symbolic reference to the *Bacwezi* in relation to King *Wamara* and the white cow *Kitare* has been found in a

kingship tradition recorded by Father Césard, transferred by members of the ruling *Bahinda* dynasty in Ihangiro (Buhaya). This tradition explains the function of *Wamara* in the *Bacwezi* system of political and spiritual kingship. It also unfolds that the white cow *Kitare* belongs to *Kintu*, the Great Ancestor and 'Big Man of the People', who decides the destiny of *Wamara*. Within a wider oral traditional context furnished by the *Bahima* specialised pastoralists in the cattle lands of the old Nkore kingdom, the symbolism of the white cow *Kitare* presented in the Ihangiro tradition has paved the way for solutions to archaeological problems regarding conspicuous material remains in Western Uganda (*Bigo bya Mugenyi*, 'the Cattle enclosures of the Stranger', a. 1200-1500 AD). Within this overall framework, the meaning of *Wamara*'s name, derived from *ku-mara*, 'to finish', has unveiled "his" record as a despotic and greedy king of the *Basingo* clan, who mismanaged cattle and kingship at *Bigo*. Violating against the basic redistribution principles of Great Lakes kingship, *Wamara* lost cattle and kingship/the drum, that was symbolised by the white cow *Kitare*.

The etymology of the name *Kitare* reflects a socio-economic system of agri-pastoralism combining the material craft of iron-working with wealth in cattle. The break-up of this system could have followed an epizootic calamity. This conclusion is drawn from symbolism contained in the *Bacwezi* traditions told by *Bahima* elders representing the former kingdom of Nkore. Invented by the Banyoro, the *Bacwezi* persona *Isimbwa*, "the little planting-spear"/the mechanism of intermarriage, is interpreted as a retrospective device summarising the process of social change, involving the separate economic development of farmers and specialised herders. Combined archaeological and oral traditional evidence support the supposition that specialised pastoralists migrated into the area with long-horned cattle, *engaaju*, at a time in history before *Bigo* was deserted. Banyankore "myth makers" tell the story of cross-breeding between the white cow and the new stock, the result of which they paint in a brown colour.

But the term *enyambo* for a long-horned, brown cow, eponymous to the Banyambo population of Karagwe, is used later. On the grounds

of a regional comparative investigation of oral and written sources the *enyambo* long-horned variety fits into the general time-frame allowed for "the Bunyoro centre of creation". Possibly dated to the eighteenth century, the institutionalisation of social stratification based on the ownership of cattle is formalised in terms of a new Creation led by *Kintu*, the Great Ancestor of the Monkey totem people. Nevertheless, this socio-political engineering is geared from the Bunyoro centre. Encompassing Rutara- as well as West Highlands speech communities, symbolism contained in traditions on the Milk Test theme communicates the impact of the *Babiito* invasion in the area. Using prevalent social values, they introduced to Rutara-speakers the royal title *Omukama*, 'the Head Milker', which enhances the king's fundamental duty to guard and protect life and fertility. The *Babiito* state ideologists systematically exploited the prestigious pastoral imagery.

Building on previous developments of separate agricultural and herding socio-economic pursuits, the *Babiito* formalised a pastoral definition of aristocracy, *Bahuma/Bahima*, which cut across the boundaries of clan networks. It is possible that the *Babiito* foreigners invaded Bunyoro from a location along the Eastern Rift, bringing long-horned cattle they called *-huma*. But in line with the Great Lakes people's reverence for mighty rulers of the past, the *-hima* term for Rutara superior status classification is likely to be derived from *enkima*, 'monkey'. This interpretation denotes continuity from *Kintu*'s clan and the position of Karagwe as a previous power centre. In environments that were not conducive to specialised herding, however, the *Bahima/ Bahuma* aristocracy consisted of iron-working clans. The support of such clans was vital to the *Babiito*, because they provided weapons for war-fare. They also performed ritual functions at court in order to enhance *Babiito* power. Other local clans of the Luo/Bantu borderland culture were diviners possessing the gift of mediation between the visible and the invisible world. Theirs was the task to connect the new dynasty to the soil of the earth of the Bunyoro hills. They had to mediate the divine blessing, which granted the *Babiito* a legitimate position in the chain of *Bacwezi* ancestors.

Babiito kingship and clan traditions in combination denote continuity from the past by the multi-level persona *Isimbwa*, who ties the *Bacwezi* dynastic line into a single family tree (Buchanan). My conclusion is that *Isimbwa*, on all levels of reality, represents the Rutara-speaking clan communities' extraordinary capacity to include and integrate foreigners into their societies. On the immaterial level "the first *Mucwezi*" *Ndahura* is understood to be a projection of the *Babiito* warrior king *Cwa Mali*. Interpreted from within a wider context, including West Highlands Banyarwanda, details from the local Kinyoro scenario help to explain and expand the *Bacwezi* system of kingship to involve the population at large. Thus the *Embandwa* spirit mediumship cult provided for the Great Lakes peoples a parallel, but different, alternative to *Bacwezi* kingship. This new dispensation offered atonement to war-ravaged communities. The *rukale* language of the courts found its equivalent in a special *embandwa* language. Crowns and robes are other visible signs granting the initiated medium access to another clan community of *Bacwezi* kingship in the invisible world, whereby they emerged "kings". Their Supreme Sovereign, *Wamara Rusingo*, "the last *Mucwezi*" had ascended the immaterial throne of the *Babiito* "Empire of *Kitara*" as *Omukama w'Abaranzi*, "King of Kings and spirits".

This book has shown that in the flow of events roughly spanning over the last two millennia, the development of the cultural history in the Great Lakes' region follows the pattern of both continuity and change. In accordance with the internal logic of source interpretation, therefore, the colonialists did not create any socio-political divisions between groups in the region. They employed social structures already in place to gain control over the populations they ruled.

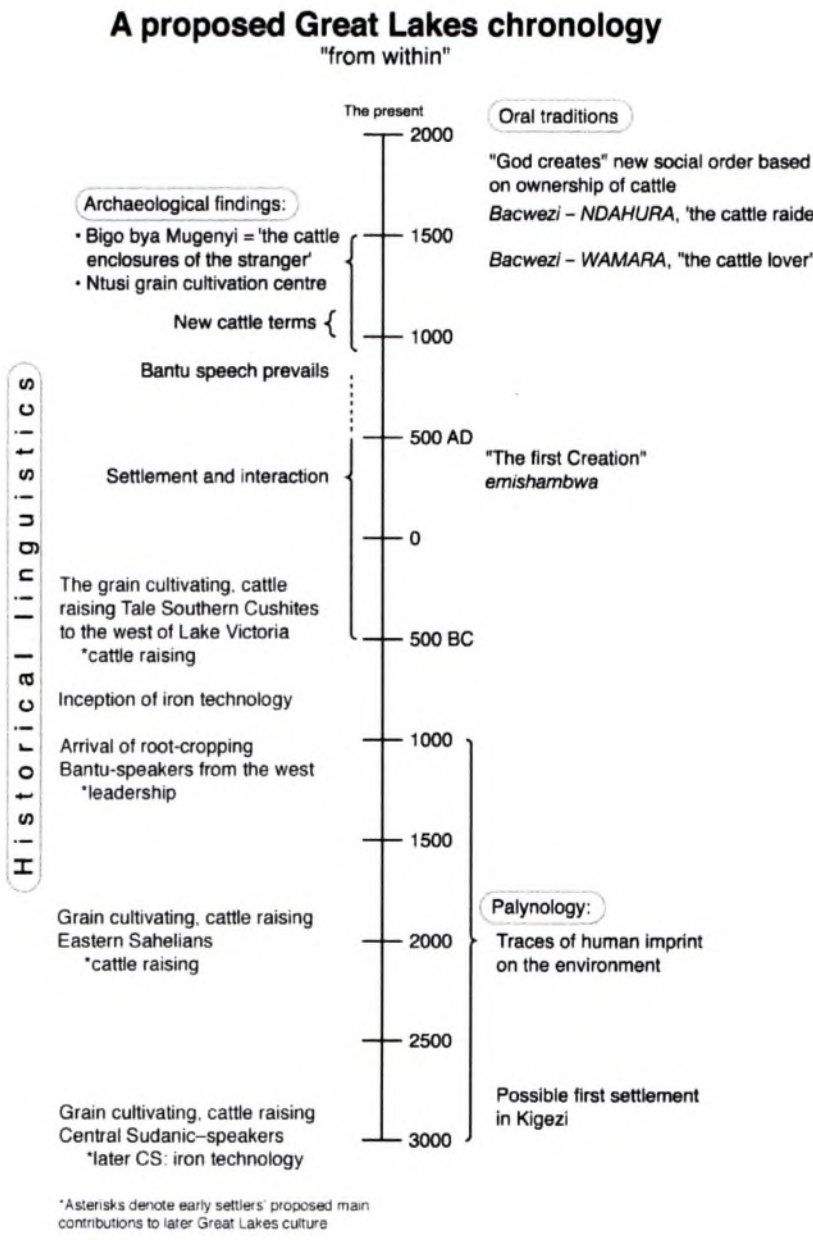

Figure 5. A proposed Great Lakes chronology "from within"

Appendix I

A. Interview Guide

Interview guide for field research on the topic:
KARAGWE KINGSHIP MYTHOLOGY AND
SYMBOLISM IN NILE VALLEY PERSPECTIVE

Area to cover

Tanzania	**Uganda**	**Rwanda**
Karagwe	Nkore	Refugees in Nairobi
Kyamutwara	Buhweju	
Kiziba	Rujumbura (Old Mpororo)	
Kianja	Igara	
Ihangiro	Bunyoro	
Bugufi	Tooro	
Buzinza (Rusubi)		
Buha		

Stories and songs

Wamara mythology
Nyamushagi theme
Songs about *enyange*, 'the white cow-heron'

Clans

Clans of special interest that are found in the whole region:
Abashambo
Abasita
Abazigaba
Abachwezi (*Abachwa*)
Abahinda/Ababito
Which ones were connected to the Bushbuck totem?
Clans with important ritual functions
The role of the mothers' clans of the kings

Cattle and milk

Names of cattle and cows
Ritual horn-deformation
Royal milk ceremonies

The royal drum

The names of all the royal drums in the region
Two names of all the kingdoms
Karagwe paramouncy
Rituals connected to the royal drum

The king
The role of the king
The king's special status reflected in language and customs
Kikale, 'royal enclosure'–where is that word used?
Omurangira, 'prince'–where is that word used?
The king's royal attire and regalia

Royal functions
Consecration of kings
The New Moon ceremonies
Harvest festivals
Burials of kings
–procedure in the different kingdoms
–sacrifice of the white cow *Kitare* and
the white sheep *Njeru*

Supernatural powers connected to the king
The king's power to procure rain and control water
The king and the lions/leopards/cobras
Sacred significance of the anthill

Checks and balances to power
King's advisors–names of the titles
The role of the king's mother and sister–names of their titles
The role of the king's *embandwa*
The *embandwa* popular spirit possession cult–channel of opposition

B. Special interview guide for Luo-speaking Acholi, Kitgum District, Uganda

1. Clans in relation to Bunyoro and Chope
Cwa
Biito
Payera
Pajule
Migration stories?
Totems?
Special trees: *Cwa*, *Biito*

2. The king
The role of the king
The king's special status reflected in languages and customs
Luo terminology for members of the royal family
The king's court

The king's royal attire and regalia

3. Royal functions
Consecration of kings
Were there any New Moon ceremonies?
Harvest festivals
Burials of kings
- Which animals were slaughtered?
- Colour? Gender?
- How was the king's corpse wrapped?
- Beliefs about the king's spirit in afterlife?
- Importance of the bark-cloth tree?

4. Royal drums and shrines
Names of drums and spears?
Who was in charge? Clan?
Rituals? When?

5. Superhuman powers connected to the king
The king's power to procure rain and control water
The king and the lions/leopards/cobras/ pythons
Sacred significance of the anthill

6. Checks and balances to power
The king's advisors
The role of the king's mother and sister–titles?
The role of the king's priest
- –The way traditions of the kingdoms were transmitted

Appendix II

Knowledgeable and informed persons consulted 1973-1997

KAGERA REGION, Tanzania
Karagwe District
Karagwe Kingdom (Banyambo)
Bukoba District
Buhaya Kingdoms (Bahaya)
Muleba District
Biharamulo District
Rusubi Kingdom (Bazinza)
Ngara District
Bugufi Kingdom (Bahangaza)
KIGOMA, Kasulu: Buha
RUKWA, Sumbawanga: Ufipa
TABORA, Tabora: Unyanyembe
SOUTH WEST REGION, Uganda
Mbarara District, formerly Ankole (Banyankore),
District/Kingdom 1901-1967
Nkore former Kingdom
Bushenyi District
Sheema County/Nkore former kingdom
Buhweju County/Buhweju former Kingdom
Igara County/Igara former Kingdom
Rukungiri District, northern part of the former Kigezi District (Bakiga)
Rujumbura principality (Bahororo)
Kabale District, south-eastern part of former Kigezi District (Bakiga)
Rwanda former kingdom (Banyarwanda)
WESTERN REGION
Bunyoro Kingdom (Banyoro)
Hoima District
Masindi District
Tooro Kingdom, Kabarole District (Batooro)
NORTHERN REGION
Kitgum District (Acholi)
Pajule Spiritual Paramouncy

Agoro, and Palwo from the house of Ono–no Lagoro association
CENTRAL REGION
Buganda (Baganda)
The kingdom of Kooki

KAGERA REGION, Tanzania

Karagwe District

Karagwe Kingdom (Banyambo)

1973-1974-**Ta Valentin Katita,** born about 1929 in Ihembe, Karagwe, was our cook and helped us with the parish-work in Ahakishaka, Nyabiyonza, Bushangaro, 1972-1974. He informed us about what was going on in the village under the surface (*oburogi*, 'witchcraft') and introduced us to the *embandwa*, 'priest' (below).

1973-1976-**Ta Kristopher Rwentabaza**, born in 1911, neighbour and friend in Ahakishaka, *Omuzigaba* of the *engabi*, 'bush-buck' totem.[1] Cattle owner (*Muhima*) and business man. Ta Kristopher was baptised into the Lutheran Church in 1974. He introduced us to *Omukama* Rumanyika II in 1975. Ta Kristopher died in 1978. But two of his daughters, **Anna Rwentabaza Zakye** and **Prisca Rwentabaza,** have later been engaged in gathering material for this book.

1973-1976, 1978-**Ma Verena Rwentabaza,** born in 1942, neighbour and friend in Ahakishaka, *Omushambo* from Rwanda, *omuziro*, 'totem': *ihirira*, 'a burnt house'. Her mother **Ma Kwera Elisabeth** was born in around 1908 and died in 2004. In 1918, when the Belgians took over Rwanda from the Germans, she was about 8 years old. Ma Kwera is identified as a *Muhungakazi* in Karagwe, but in Rwanda they are *Abeega*, one of the clans that provide wives for the kings, *Abami*, sing. *Umwami*. They are all of the *enkira*, 'everything tail-less' totem. Ma Verena was originally a Roman Catholic but became a member of the Lutheran Church, when her husband (above) was baptised. We have kept close family relations until the present. Nowadays it is possible to reach her by mobile telephone.

1974-1976-**Ta Kipanda,** born around 1934, *Omuhutu* (not to be mistaken for Hutu/Tutsi dichotomy) of the *enfunzi*, 'small bird' totem, kept the beliefs of his ancestors, a fisherman who played the *igubule*. He had learnt many songs from his father, who had stayed at the court of *Omukama* Rumanyika II. Lived in Ahakishaka with his mother, Ma Maria Kambabazi. Died towards the end of the 1970's.

1974-1976 -**Ma Maria Kambabazi,** born about 1892, *Omushambo*, of a fisherman's family from the lake shore of Mujunju, before she moved to Ahakishaka. Her father had been an *embandwa*, 'priest'. She was a potter and had practised as a *mufumu gw'emwani*, 'diviner in coffee beans'. Shared knowledge of the *Bacwezi*. In 1976 she was baptised in the Lutheran Church. Died towards the end of the 1970's.

1974-1976, 1978-**Ma Paulina Mukarunyana,** born around 1916, *Omuhunga* of the *enkira* totem, of cattle keeper's family (*Bahima*), lived in Ahakishaka village on the ridge top, while her husband stayed away herding cattle on the plains of the valley. She became a Christian of the ELCT in recent years. Had a good knowledge of *emigani*, 'tales', and kingship rituals. Died in 2004.

1974-1976-**Ta Elias Lugimbana,** born around 1915, *Omugiri* of the *omutima*, 'heart', totem from Kyamutwara, Buhaya, lived in Kashasha village, Nyakaiga, Bushangaro, and worked as an evangelist in Ahakishaka Lutheran congregation. Shared freely of his deep knowledge in cultural matters. Told me several interesting *emigani* from Buhaya. Died in 1992.

1974-1976, 1978-**Ma Konstancia Kyabona,** born around 1916, *Omushambo* (?) by clan. She was born in Ankore and came to Karagwe as a child. She was our neighbour and a much consulted *embandwa*, 'priest', in Ahakishaka and all over Bushangaro. She had "inherited" the *Kanyamwenge embandwa*, 'spirit' of her maternal aunt, and said that she was initiated into the *embandwa* spirit mediumship cult because she wanted to have children. Her first three children died. She said she was baptised in the Roman Catholic Church because she wanted to follow the religion of her husband and only daughter. She was a good *omugani* teller. Her paternal grandmother from Ankore had taught her the *emigani*. Died in 1978.

1974-1976, 1978-80, 1989, 1991-**Mwalimu Gabriel Kasenene**, born around 1920, *Omugara* of the *ente ya runya* 'striped cow' totem. Lives in Kashasha village, Nyakaiga, Bushangaro. Clan ancestors had migrated from Ankore to the Siina plains in northern Karagwe, *omuruka*, 'hereditary clan function at court': *Bayondo*, 'cooks'. His father was the cook of *Omukama* Ntare (whom the Germans executed in 1915) and had been close to Rumanyika II. Mwl. Kasenene has been headmaster of the Primary School at Kayungu, a businessman and church elder in the Lutheran Church. He acted as our advisor and is a good teacher. He knows how to apply old *emigani* to the Christian context for educational purposes.

1974-1976-**Felista K. Elisa,** born around 1950, *Omuyango* (*Omuhinda*) of the *enkende*, 'monkey' totem, from Nyakagoyagoye village, Bushangaro. Attended Bible School at Ruhidja Evangelical Academy, employed part-time to help us in the house. She also helped as a parish worker. She assisted me with transcriptions and translations of cassette-tapes. Died in the 1980's.

1975-1976-**Ta Matayo Rwemburara** (Roman Catholic), born around 1905, *Omuhutu*, *omuziro*: *enfunzi*, 'small bird', came as a child from Kigezi, Uganda, primary education in Kiziba, Buhaya. Lived in Ahakishaka and had been *enanga*-player at the court of King Rumanyika II. A distinguished performer of *emigani*, 'tales'. Died in 1978.

1975-1976-**Ta Kaffrinkana,** born around 1910, *Omuhunga* of the *enkira* 'everything tail-less' totem, faithfully kept the beliefs of his ancestors. Shared *emigani*. Died at the beginning of the 1990's.

1976-**Ma Araikiliza Kaffrinkana,** born around 1926, shared *emigani*. They had been "given" to her by her mother, who was born in Kiruruma, a village in Bushangaro.

1976-**Ma Victoria Kakuru,** born around 1925, her son Gerard was a fisherman, *omujubi*, shared the *emigani* she had learnt from her grandmother, who was from Nshambi village in the neighbourhood of Bugene, central Karagwe.

Elders consulted by **Stanislaus Bashungwa,** *Omugahe* from Ahakishaka, a linguist at the University of Dar-es-Salaam, who died in 2002: 1975-**Ma Amelia Bashungwa,** *Omuyango* of the *enkende*, 'monkey' totem, Stanislaus' mother, Ahakishaka village, Karagwe. Passed on in 2010.

June 1986-**Ta Rwabasingo,** born around 1926, *Omuyango* of the *enkende*, 'monkey' totem, had been *omutambi*, doctor and herbalist at the *kikale*, 'royal enclosure', Bweranyange.

September 1986-**Ta Musolini Rumanyika,** born around 1929, *Omuhinda* of the *enkende*, 'monkey' totem, Nyaishozi, Karagwe.

December 1986-**Ta Ferdinand Rwabutondogoro,** born around 1926, *Omuzigaba*, Kibumbwe kya Bahima village, beyond the Maya mountain, Bushangaro.

Information and planning in Dar-es-Salaam October 1986, 7/1 and 27/11 1988-**Prof. Sebastian K. Lutahoire,** born in 1937, *Omulisa/Omugahe*, primary totem: partridge, a bird with red legs, secondary totem: *enkuba*, 'thunder', born in Masheshe, Kituntu. His father was a sub-chief, head of *ishaza*. Lutahoire is a Lutheran theologian interested in counselling who did religio-sociological research in Karagwe (see Bibliography).

Interviews 13/2 1989, 14/9 1991-**Mzee Warwo Rwakataguza,** born around 1900, *Omushambo* (*Omusindi*) of *enshinjo*, totem 'a woman who gets pregnant outside marriage'. Lived in Kishasha, Nyakaiga. He had been one of the keepers of the Karagwe royal drum, *Nyabatama*. *Enganzi z'Omukama*, 'councillor to the king', Rumanyika II. Mzee Warwo was baptised into the Roman Catholic Church in recent years, but nobody used his Christian name. Died in 1999. Assistance: **Mr Michael Mwombeki.**

In Bukoba 10/9 1991-**Ndugu George Rumanyika,** born in 1961, son of *Omukama* Daudi Rumanyika II with Ma Gerensia Wilson, Bweranyange. Gave information about the *okubyalira*, 'burial', of his father, who passed on 5/3 1988. Rumanyika II ruled Karagwe 1925-1939.

Information, planning and discussions in Dar-es-Salaam 10/11, 23/11 1989, in Karagwe September and November 1991-**Prof. Israel Katoke,** (Lutheran) born in 1928, place of residence: Lukajange. Grandfather: *Omukurwa* of the *engabi* 'bushbuck' totem, who migrated from Bugabo, in Karagwe identified with the *Abazigaba* of the *engabi* totem. *Omuruka*: to prepare the royal hides. He was one of the African pioneers in writing the history of his people from oral traditions and had been a lecturer in history at the University of Dar-es-Salaam and held international positions within the framework of UNESCO. Prof. Katoke was a founding member of IRREC and was the principal consultant for my fieldwork in Karagwe. For unresolved reasons he was brutally murdered in his home in 2003.

Discussion and planning at Nyakaiga 13/9 1991-**Rev. Father Didas Kasusura,** *Omuhinda* of the *enkende* 'monkey' totem, the son of *Omukama* Stanislaus Kasusura of Rusubi (Buzinza) and **Rev. Father Privatus Karugendo,** *Omurwani* of the *ente ya runya*, 'striped cow' totem from Kyamutwara. *Emiruka*: bodyguards of the king and responsible for the preparation his throne, *ekituti*. Father Didas introduced me to his father and Father Privatus took me to Mzee Kajungu and offered me transport all the way to Ngara.

Interview 17/9 1991-**Ma Justina Kokubanza** born in 1922, *Munkangokazi*, from 1982 living in Kakelele (omukitoju) village, Nkwenda. In 1934 she was ritually cleansed at Mwoga with *Omukama* Daudi Rumanyika II to be his *Mukangoma*, 'wife of the drum'. When I met her son **Christian Rumanyika** (Ruhija) in Bukoba 9/9 1991, he introduced me to his mother. Present: Boas Kaitaba and Prof. Katoke, who conducted the interview.Mukangoma died in 2008.

Information 18/9 1991-**Ndugu Boas Kaitaba**, *Omwihuzi* of the *omutima*, 'heart' totem, District Cultural (*Utamaduni*) Officer of Karagwe. Performed the *Enyange* song at his office in Kayanga and showed the remaining iron artefacts of the *ekikare*, 'royal enclusure', *Bweranyange*. The famous iron cows are kept in the National Museum of Dar-es-Salaam and at the Leiden Museum in Stuttgart, Germany. Boas Kaitaba assisted at interviews and introduced me to the *Kinyanyengoma*, 'drum sister', one of his maternal grandmothers, and to Mzee Kajungu, among others.

Interview 18/9 1991-**Ta Timweshobwa Rushambira**, born around 1941 and **Ma Mukampisi**, *Abatundu* (*Abaheta*) of the *malega* 'rainwater' totem, *omuruka*: the king's brewers. Present: Prof. Katoke and Boas Kaitaba, *Utamaduni* office at Kayanga. Prof. Katoke conducted the interview.

Interview 19/9 1991-**Ta Yakobo Kataki Bahemu**, born in 1904, *Omugara* of the *ente ya runya*, 'striped cow' totem, close friend of *Omukama* Rumanyika's. His father was *Rujururuzi*, a name referring to a tall man, the *Muyondo*, 'cook' of the king. Boas Kaitaba introduced me to Ta Yakobo Kataki and assisted me in conducting the interview in his home in Nyakahanga Village. The old man must have died soon afterwards, because we found him bed-ridden and in a bad condition.

Interview 19/9 1991-**Ta Leonard Aligawesa**, born in 1922, *Omutundu*, Nyakahanga village, grandfather had been *Omukungu*, 'village headman' but he himself had been *Katikiro*, 'Prime Minister' of *Omukama* B.I. Ruhinda VII before he was stripped of his political powers by the independent Government of Tanganyika in 1963. The British had installed Ruhinda in 1940. Present: Boas Kaitaba. Passed on in 2004.

25/11-28/11 1991-**Mwalimu John Kahatano,** born in 1921, *Omuzigaba* of the *engabi*, 'bushbuck', totem, Roman Catholic, lives in Isingiro Parish, Karukwanzi village, Kaisho. His grandfathers had migrated from Kiziba, where they were

Barwani of the *engabi* totem and had held *emyoga* or *emiruka* traditional duties at court as diviners, *bafumu*, smiths, *bahesi* and hunters, *bahigi*. He was my research co-ordinator and host in Kaisho.

26/11-28/11 1991-**Mwalimu Venant Rutaromba Patel,** *Omuyango* of the *enkende*, 'monkey', totem. Village: Nyabishenge, Kaisho. He is the son of Ma Bachorobekwa, below. Rutaromba is the name of his father. Mwl. Patel assisted at interviews. He died.

Interview 26/11 1991-**Ma Theodora Bachorobekwa,** born in 1911, clan: *Omuhinda*, totem: *enkende,* 'monkey', *Kinyanyengoma*, 'drum sister' of *Omukama* Rumanyika II, in Nyabishenge village, Kaisho. Bachorobekwa's mother was Kachelebaho of the *Basiita* clan, who was first married to *Omukama* Ntare VII and then as a widow inherited by *Omukama* Rumanyika (*akamuhungura*). Bachorobekwa's father was *Omukama* Ntare. Kachelebaho's sister was Boas Kaitaba's grandmother. Roman Catholic. Present: Boas Kaitaba, Mwl. John Kahatano, Mwl. Venant Rutaromba Patel and Mrs Aligawesa, Nyakahanga, "cousin sister"[2] of Bachorobekwa. BF conducted the interview, assisted by those present. Kinyanyengoma passed on.

Interview 26/11 1991-**Ta Petro Kapele,** born in 1908, *Omuhinda* of the *enkende*, 'monkey' totem, Kaisho. His father, Ta Bukoko, had been confidant, *omuramata*, to the king. Mwl. Patel conducted the interview, BF took notes (BFFN/4:15-31).

Interview 27/11 1991-**Ta Joel Kakuba,** born in 1914, *Omushambo*, since 1934 an immigrant from Rwanda, now living in Katera, Kaisho. Had been *Mukungu*, 'village headman' 1952-1970, had owned a claim at the tin mine of Kyerwa 1947-1974. Lutheran. Present: Mwl. Patel and Boas Kaitaba, who assisted.

Information 28/11 1991-**Ma Johana Fransisca Holimwigana,** born around 1928, *Omwitira* (*Omuhutu*) of the *amashereka* 'breast milk' totem, who visited Mwl. Kahatano in Karukwanzi. Her clan's people used to bring the first millet to the king at Bweranyange, *kuganuza Omukama*. A devoted Roman-Catholic.

Information 28/11 1991-**Ta Furugensi Gwenyemera,** born in 1942, *Omugahe* of the *ente ya kinya n'ebihara* totem, also called *ente ya kizomba*, which is a cow with an ugly pattern. Visited Mwl. Kahatano, from Kayungu, Bushangaro.

Information 29/11 1991-**Rev. Father Luduviki Rwakiboine**, born in 1910 in Kasheshe, *Omunkango* of the *amara*, 'intestines' totem, had served as a priest for 48 years. Found him in the Nyaishozi Catholic Mission.

Interview 29/11 1991**Mzee Kajungu**, born around 1893, when the Germans left in 1918 he had paid 7 yearly taxes. *Omukaraza* of *ente ya runya*, 'striped cow' totem. He had been the main keeper of the Karagwe kingship drum as well as a member of the king's council, *enganzi*. Lived in Kasheshe. Mzee Kajungu had been baptised into the Roman Catholic Church, but there was no mention of his Christian name. Died a few years after the interview. Father Privatus Karugendo was present at the interview together with Boas Kaitaba, who assisted.

Information given in Ahakishaka to Ma Paulina Mukarunyana's grandson **Dudu Jason Munanira,** 17/5 1995-**Mzee Kahondogo,** born around 1925, *Omuhinda* of the *enkende* totem.

Bukoba District

Buhaya Kingdoms (Bahaya)
Kyamutwara (Bayoza)

Information given in Dar-es-Salaam 31/10 1988-**Mrs Gil Helleberg**, around 50 years old, *Omusingo* from Kyamutwara on her mother's side.

Information given in Dar-es-Salaam, September 1989, interview 21-23/9 1991-**Omukama Emmanuel Rukamba II,** born around 1927, of the *Bankango* dynasty of the *amara*, 'intestines' totem, of the Kyamutwara old kingdom at his *ekikale*, 'royal enclosure', Kabale, not far from Bukoba town. *Omukama* E. Rukamba has faithfully kept his traditional ritual functions in the kingdom at the same time being actively involved in the national politics of Tanzania through the local government in Bukoba. He had been baptised a Roman Catholic. Passed on in 2007. **Omurangira[3] Joakim Bwahama** introduced me to the *Omukama* in Dar-es-Salaam.

Information in Bukoba, 9/9 1991, 10/10 1992-**Rev. Dean Wilson Lugakingira,** *Omucwezi* of the *enfuru*, 'fish' totem, "because fish had eaten the feet of *Wamara*". Served as the Dean of the NW Diocese of the ELCT. Dean Lugakingira invited Prof. Katoke and myself to conduct a seminar on the *Bacwezi* for Church workers and lay people, which took place 7-8 October 1992 in Bukoba.

Information 11/12 1991-**Mzee Richard Mutembei,** born in 1924, from Rugaze, Kitwe, Administrative Secretary of the ELCT 1962-1985, authorised as a Luhaya language examiner. Mzee Mutembei had been a teacher and knew how to explain the beliefs of his ancestors (see Bibliography). Died in 2003.

Kiziba (Baziba)

Information, translation work, planning, introductions and local contact, Dar-es-Salaam 1988-89, 1991-**Prof. Mugyabuso Mulokozi,** IRREC colleague, Ministry of Labour, Culture and Social Welfare in charge of cultural issues, later Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Kiswahili Research. Prof. Mulokozi has done research on the role of the *enanga* 'trough zither' epics in Buhaya (see Bibliography).

Information at Dr Mulokozi's office in Dar-es-Salaam, June 1989-**Mzee Leopold Rwizandekwe,** born around 1925 in Kiziba. Mzee Rwizandekwe is very much familiar with Kiziba kingship rituals and introduced me to *Omwana* Amelia below.

Information in Dar-es-Salaam 11/7 1989, Interview 24/9 1991-**Omwana Amelia Mutahangarwa,** born in 1909, *Omubitokazi* of the *engabi* totem. The last daughter, *omwana*, 'princess' but the literal translation is 'child', of *Omukama* Mutahangarwa (ruled Kiziba 1903-1916). The interview took place in Gera village. Present: *Omwana* Amelia's daughter, **Josephina Rwamgira,** a practising herbalist in Dar-es-Salaam, granddaughter of *Omwami*, 'Subchief', F.X. Lwamgira, author of *Amakuru ga Kiziba na Abakama bamwo*, 'The history of Kiziba and its kings', 1924 (second edition). Present in Gera: **Rev. Joseph Bocko,** *Omushambo*, Lutheran priest, one of *Omwana* Amelia's grandsons, who transcribed the tapes recorded on this occasion into English.

Interview 28/9 1991-**Rev. Ernest Lutashobya,** born in 1919, *Omushaga* of the *ensenene*, 'grasshopper' totem, Mbale village in Kashasha Lutheran Parish, where he used to keep the house of his father, *omushonge*, as a historical memorial. His uncle was the *embandwa*, 'priest' of *Wamara* at the *kikale* of the Kiziba kings. Rev. Lutashobya has been the Principal of the Ruhija Bible School of the North-Western Diocese of the ELCT (cf. Sundkler 1980). He died in 2007.

Information in Bukoba 13/12 1991-**Mwalimu Yazidi Makora,** born in 1945, *Omuziba* of the *engabi*, 'bushbuck' totem, from Amagiro village, Nyakashozi, Rukurungo, Moslem teacher and missionary. Met him at the house of **Omumbeja**[4](Princess) **Paskazia Bwahama,** born in 1919, *Omunkango* of the

amara, 'intestines', totem. She is the paternal aunt, *ishenkazi*, of *Omukama* E. Rukamba of Kyamutwara and the wife of *Omukama* Ruhinda of Ihangiro. Mwl. Yazidi Makora is the maternal uncle, *mawento*, of the *Omumbeja*, although the former is of a younger generation.

Kianja (Bahamba)

Information on the flight from Mwanza to Dar-es-Salaam 2/9 1979-**Ms Erika Timotheo**, born around 1944, of the *Bayango* clan, Kianja and Principal Resident Tutor at the National Correspondence Institute, Dar-es-Salaam.

Information in Bukoba 6/9 1991-**Mr Mujuni Byabato**, born in 1939, *Omuhinda* of the *enkende*, 'monkey' totem, son of Rev. Dean Matia Lutosha, below. Works as an administrator at the ELCT Central Office in Bukoba.

Interview 6/12 1991-**Rev. Dean Matia Lutosha**, born in 1907, *Omuhinda* of the *enkende*, 'monkey' totem, heir to rule the kingdom of Kianja, which he did not accept. Had been the Dean of the NW Diocese of Bukoba, ELCT (cf. Sundkler 1980). Lived in Kafunjo village, Kamachumu, and kept the history of his ancestors alive. Died in 2000.

Muleba District

Ihangiro (Banyaihangiro)

Interviews 25/9 and 8/12 1991-**Rev. Sylvester Machumu**, born in 1914, *Omuhimba* of the *embogo*, 'buffalo' totem. His grandfathers were hunters and had migrated from Ankore to Kasheshe in Karagwe, whence they had come to settle in Ihangiro. His father was the priest of the clan (Sundkler 1980: 74). Lived in Bugarama village, Kihumu. Rev. Machumu was a priest of the ELCT and died in 1997.

Information and comments on the first interview with Rev. Machumu, in Bukoba 8/10 1992-**Rev. Sylvester Kahakwa**, born in 1948, *Omusindi* of the *ente ya runya*, 'cow with dark brown stripes' totem. Village: Bihija Rushwa, 12 km west of Kihumu. His father was an *embandwa*, 'priest,' dedicated to the spirit of Ruboha. Rev. Kahakwa is a priest of the ELCT.

Biharamulo District

Rusubi Kingdom (Bazinza)

Interview 4/12 1991

Omukama **Stanislaus Rugaba Kasusura,** born in 1918, of the *Bahinda* dynasty respecting the *enkende*, 'monkey', totem. Biharamulo town. *Omukama* Kasusura was a Roman Catholic and he died in 1995.

Ngara District

Bugufi Kingdom (Bahangaza)

Interviews 30/11, 2/12 1991-**Mzee Semuguruka, Daniel** (Anglican), born in 1912, clan: *Mubanda*, totem: *ifunzi*, 'small bird', Musumba village, Mkagezi Valley in Ngara district. Mzee Semuguruka had taken extensive notes on the old customs of his people. He had held the office of *Umutegetsi*, "like the Prime Minister", of *Umwami* Baramba II in 1943. At the installation this king had been the first to refuse *Lyangombe* because of his Christian faith. Mzee Semuguruka had been Area Commissioner in Biharamulo 1965-1969. Introduction: **Rev. John Buchanimanza,** Murgwanza Mission of the Anglican Church Centre.

Interview 3/12 1991-**Mzee Thomas Bgoya**, born in 1911, *Omuheta* of the *mhongo*, 'bushbuck' totem, in Ngara town. Their grandfather was advisor to the king, *Mutwale*, 'sub-chief' and appointed headman of a village of 1000 people. Introduction: Mzee Bgoya's nephew **Ndugu Walter Bgoya,** a publisher in Dar-es-Salaam.

KIGOMA, Kasulu: Buha
RUKWA, Sumbawanga: Ufipa
TABORA, Tabora: Unyanyembe

Introduction 21/10, interview in Dar-es-Salaam, Magomeni 22/10 1992 ***Mwami*** **Theresa Ntare** of Buha, *kikale*: Herujuu, Kasulu town, Kigoma Region, who was married to **Mwene Louis Paul Dantes Ngua** of the Fipa, Sumbawanga District, Rukwa Region. The **Mtemi Fundikira** of Unyanyembe of the Wanyamwezi people, Tabora District/Region was also present. All these were traditional rulers of *Tusi* dynasties. Introduction: Theresa Ntare's son and heir **Costas Shinganya**. *Mwami* Theresa Ntare died a few years afterwards.

SOUTH WEST REGION, Uganda
Mbarara District, formerly Ankole (Banyankore), District/Kingdom1901-1967
Nkore former Kingdom
Kashari County

Information and introductions at Makerere University, Kampala, December 1986, 1991-**Dr Leuben Njinya-Mujinya,** born in 1954, *Omugahe/Omusiita* of the *ente engobe*, 'striped cow' totem, lecturer at the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Makerere University. His great grandfathers migrated from Karagwe first to settle in Rwampara, the ancient Mpororo Kingdom. Much later some of them moved on to settle in their present home in Kashari. Mujinya's mother was an *Omutsyaba* of the *oburunga*, 'red and black seeds from the *omulinzi* tree' totem. Mujinya said that his mother used to tell them a lot of tales, *ebigano*, among those was the *Nyamushagi* tradition.

Interview 15/2 1992-**Mzee Anania Murumba** (Anglican), born in 1910, *Omubiito* of the *engabi*, 'bushbuck', totem, Kashari. His grandfather had come from Tooro to settle in Bunyaruguru in Bushenyi. The interview was held together with **Mzee Petero Garobungo** (Anglican), born in 1907, *Omuhinda w'Omusonga*, *Omuhinda* of the *Abasonga* sub-clan, *omuziro*: *ensenene*, 'grass-hopper', Kashari. His ancestors had migrated from Bunyoro via Busongora, Bukunju, Kasese and Tooro, gradually reaching Nkore. His father and grandfather had come as *Bahinda*. Garobungo's father had made bloodbrotherhood with Murumba's grandfather. Murumba's ancestors came first. Mzee Garobungo had been one of the *Bahinda* who had been selected to train and instruct Gasyonga II, who ruled Ankole 1945-1967.

Interview 17/2 1992-**Omuhinda John C. Machwa,** born in 1916, was a Prince, *Omuhinda*, Kashari. Died in the 1990's.

Interview 18/2 1992-**Mzee John Mark Mutembeya,** born in 1906, *Omuhinda* of the *enkyende*, 'monkey' totem, Bwizi, Kashari. He is a descendant of the *Abahinda* who came from Karagwe, but his ancestors came long before King Rumanyika. Mutembeya's father was the keeper of *Kagondo*, in Nkore the common denomination for the shrine and the spirits of the dead kings and important *Abahinda*, princes. Died in the 1990's.

Interview 26/3 1992-**Mzee Geoffrey William Katondwaki,** born in 1910, *Omugahe w'Omukungu* of the *ente*, 'striped cow' totem, born in Nshara, near Lake Mburo. Lives in Karwera, Kashari. His uncle Kamugungunu, who was *Omugabe*

Kahaya's Prime Minister, appointed him a clerk to the king, who had paid his school fees. Kahaya II ruled 1897-1944 (Karugire 1971:173).

Interview 29/3 1992-**Mzee George William Nagokwo,** born in 1929, *Omugahe w'Omururu* of the *engabi* 'bushbuck' totem, Nyarubanga, Kashari. Originally *Abaruru* were keepers of *Murorwa*, the drum of Mpororo and Kahaya I. At that time *Bagyendanwa* was black and known as *Muyumbo*. (Kahaya buried the drum *Murorwa* when his sons did not obey him. That ended the Mpororo kingdom.) Kahurira, a *Mururu*, came with Ntare I of Nkore, to decorate it white and black so that it could look like *Murorwa*. As a reward for making it beautiful Kahurira was allowed to be the drum keeper and the position was to be hereditary. Nagokwo said he was the 32nd after Kahurira in the line of *Abaruru* drum keepers of *Bagyendanwa*.

Nyabushozi County

Interview 16/2 1992-**Mzee Elfaz Rwoya**, born in 1906, *Omugahe/Omusingo* of the *eiirira*, 'a burnt house, especially if it burns with ghee in it' totem. He lived in Rwanda Rwera, Nyabushozi. Mzee Rwoya was a *Muhima* cattle owner, who grew up at the palace as a page boy. Said that the *Basingo* ancestors were warriors, who killed *Mucwezi Mulindwa*. Mzee Rwoya was the maternal uncle, *nyinarumi*, of Mzee Katuuka, below. Present: **Mwesigye Emmanuel,** *Omugahe/Musingo* and young relative, who translated what the Mzee said. Elfaz Rwoya died a few years afterwards.

Interview 28/3 1992-**Mzee Israel Katuuka,** born in 1919, *Omushambo* of the *ekihirira*, 'burnt house', *epa*, 'a woman with undeveloped breasts' and *endaaro*, 'a girl who gets pregnant out of wedlock', totems, Beneruhiri subclan. Home: Orwera. Mzee Katuuka's and Mzee Rwoya's combined contributions elucidating the *Miringoigana* song turned out to be as important as the *Nyamushagi* tradition told by Ta Matayo in Karagwe. Contact: **Mzee Kilimani,** Head of Lake Mburo Resettlement Project.

Interview 19/2 1992-**Rev. James Washington Kashaka,** born in 1918, *Omukimbiri*, a subclan of the *Bahinda*, of the *akafute*, 'something which, at birth, brings forth legs first', totem. Home: Nshwerempango, Rushere, Nyabushozi. At the age of nine Kashaka was taken by the *Rubuga*[5], 'Crown Sister' of *Omugabe* Kahaya to be his *Omubonetsya*, who served the king his milk and took care of his *ebyanzi* milk vessels. He has done extensive research on his culture. Contact: Dr Leuben Njinya-Mujinya.

Ibanda County

Interview 27/3 1992-**Mzee G.N. Patrick Kirindi,** born in 1912, *Omushambo* of the *epa*, 'a woman with undeveloped breasts' and *ekihirira*, 'burnt house' totems. Lives in Mitoma. His grandfathers had come from Mpororo. It is evident that Mzee Kirindi has done research on interlacustrine history and culture ever since he was the key assistant collecting material for Dr H.F. Morris' book *The Heroic Recitations of the Bahima of Nkore*, published in 1964. Kirindi's sister **Mrs Doreka Kundira,** born around 1910, *Omushambo w'Omushaari* subclan, sang the *Nyamushagi* song.

Bushenyi District

Sheema County/Nkore Former Kingdom

Information and introduction at the University of Nairobi in 1978, Kampala 1986, Rome 1991, Sheema 1992, 1995-**Ambassador Prof. Tibamanya Mwene Mushanga**, *Omuhweju*. Home: Kagango, village in Itendero parish, Kagango subcounty. Prof. Mushanga is a criminologist and has done research on clans and culture of the Banyankore (see Bibliography). He was my principal consultant and contact person for the fieldwork in the former district of Ankole, currently Mbarara and Bushenyi and selected **Mrs Robinah Katungwenzi** for the task of research assistance.

Information and planning in Kampala, December 1986, 23/1 1992-**Dr Joshua Muvumba,** born in 1944, *Omugahe* of the *engobe* 'striped cow (black against brown)' totem, a political scientist and author on interlacustrine culture and history (see Bibliography). Dr Muvumba has a profound knowledge of oral history. Father: Mzee Lazaro Kamugungunu, who was the main author of *Abagabe Ba Ankole I & II*. Home: Kyagazhu. Contact: Dr Leuben Njinya-Mujinya.

Information in Kampala 10/3 1987 and 23/1 1992-**Mr Coleb Kamugungunu,** born in 1940, *Omugahe* of the *engobe* 'striped cow' totem, a veterinary scientist, expert on cattle names and clan names and Joshua Muvumba's brother. Died in 1997.

Buhweju County/Buhweju former Kingdom

Interview in Mbarara town 15/2 1992-**Mzee Yason Zakye,** born in 1920 of the *Bariisa* ruling clan of the *engabi*, 'bushbuck' totem. The kingship drum of Buhweju

was *Masheija*. *Abariisa* came from Lower Mpororo, Kyabukuuju in Rubaare sub-district, but the grandfathers said that the *Abariisa* migrated from Kyabariisa in Karagwe. Died in 2009.

Interview 17/2 1992-**Mzee James Kafamaisho**, born in 1917, *Omushambo w'Omusaasira* subclan of the *epa*, 'a woman with undeveloped breasts', totem; home: Nsika. Kafamaisho's great grandfather, Muyogoma, migrated from Lower Mpororo. The *Abasaasira* had specific functions in the palace.

Igara County/Igara former Kingdom

Interview in Ishaka town, 20/2 1992-**Mzee George William Binyindo**, born in 1919, *Omushambo w'Omuteizi* of the *epa* totem; home: Kantojo k'Eizoba. Binyindo in Igara is popularly known as *Ishenkuru Abagoma*, 'the grandfather of *Abagoma*', who were the owners of the Igara kingship drum *Kihooza*. He was the last keeper of *Kihooza* before it was taken to the museum in 1967 (cf. Karugire 1971:264).

Interview 3/4 1992-**Mr Benedikito K. Mubangizi**, born in 1926, *Omwitira* of the *amashereka* 'breast milk' totem. He was a Roman Catholic teacher at the Musilit Centre, Kitabi, who had been doing extensive research on the history and customs of the Banyankore see Bibliography). Said that all his informants had passed on. He died in 1995.

Interview 3/4 1992-**Mzee Yowasi Bwirizayo**, born about 1937, *Omugoboka w'Omuyangwe* of the *enkyende nke*, small monkey called *akakira*, totem; home: Kibaare, Bweranyangi, Igara. *Abayangwe* are closely associated with Nkore kings and originated from Karagwe. Bwirizayo is the head of the clan, *Ishenkuru Abagoboka*. Mzee Bwirizayo's ancestors moved from Karagwe to a place called Kirere and Kyarushaija in Rwampara (formerly Mpororo). Some settled there and others, including his great grandfather moved on until they reached Igara and settled in Kibaare. Bwirizayo is three generations from the *Abayangwe* that initially came to Kibaare. Abagoboka sub-clan originates from Ngoboka, the son of Ruhinda rwa Njunaki. Their daughters are *Nyamushagi*. Introduction: **Mzee Rwabutomize Misera**, born in 1918, *Omwitira* of the *amashereka*, 'breast milk' totem, Kibaare, Bweranyange. He told a short version of the *Nyamushagi* tradition.

Rukungiri District, northern part of the former Kigezi District (Bakiga)

Rujumbura principality (Bahororo)

Information, planning and introductions, University of Dar-es-Salaam 1986-1988, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda 1990-94–**Mr G.T. Mishambi,** born in 1948, *Omwitira* of the *amashereka*, 'breast milk' totem, from Kabwoma village, Nyakagyeme Parish, Senior Lecturer in History, founding member of IRREC. Died in 2004.

Interview 31/3 1992-**Mzee Philemon Kitaburaza** (Anglican), born in 1922, heir to the *Bashambo* dynasty in Rujumbura of the *Beenekirenzi* line, *omuziro*: *epu*, 'a woman with undeveloped breasts'. Passed on in 1993. Interviewed in his home at Kagunga aha Kitoma village together with **Rev. Canon Emeritus Emmanuel Ndihimbirwe** (Anglican), born in 1910, clan: *Omushambo w'Omunzira*, totem: *epu*, 'a woman with undeveloped breasts'.

Information 31/3, April and November 1992-**Mrs Justina Kitaburaza**, born in 1927, *Omuranzikazi*, widow of Mzee Kitaburaza, Kagunga aha Kitoma. Said that one *Omuhindakazi* of Karagwe had been married to the *Baranzi* of Bujumbura.

Information in Kampala, 28/10 1992-**Dr Patrick Kakwenzire,** *Omushambo wa Beenekirenzi*, heir to the late Mzee Kitaburaza, was a senior lecturer at the Department of History, Makerere University. Died in 1993.

Interview 2/4 1992-**Mr Simon Baitwababo,** born in 1942, *Omutsyaba* of the *oburunga*, 'red and black seeds of the *omulinzi* tree', totem; home: Kitanda, Buyanja, Rukungiri. Mr Baitwababo is a devoted historian, who has gathered extensive material about interlacustrine culture with special emphasis on the Mpororo Old Kingdom (see Bibliography).

Interview 2/4 1992-**Mzee Lazaro Mishambi,** born around 1902, *Omwitira* of the *amashereka*, 'breast milk', totem, home: Kabwoma village, Nyakagyeme parish. **Mrs Mishambi**, born around 1910, *Omusingokazi* of the *ngobe*, 'striped cow' totem added interesting information on clan rituals.

Kabale District, southeastern part of former Kigezi District (Bakiga)

Information in Kampala 21/9 1997-**Mr John Twinomusinguzi,** born in 1942, *Omulihira* of the *engobe*, 'cow with one stripe', totem, great great grandson of the keeper of the clan's shrine, *Ekitoma*, in Nyagoye village, Kabale.

Rwanda Former Kingdom (Banyarwanda)

Interview in Uganda 17/2 1992 **Bishop Kossiya Shalita,** born in 1902, hailing from Rwanda (*Mututsi*). he was one of the first African Anglican bishops, ordained at Bishop Tucker's Theological College in Mukono. The interview took place at his home in Rwentanga, Kashari and covered aspects of Rwandan kingship ideology and the role of cattle in kingship. Bishop Shalita passed on in 1995.

Information in Kampala given to **Uwera, Mary H.,** October 1995-**Mrs Rose Kantarama,** born in 1909, *Mugyesera* of the *enkyende*, 'monkey', totem, Rwandese refugee in Kampala. The information covered aspects of the economic, social and political set up of Rwanda.

Mr Butare Dismas introduced me to **Umwami Kigeli V Ndahindurwa**, ex-king of Rwanda, and conducted interviews among elders of the Banyarwanda community in Nairobi. Butare is *Umushambo* by clan and trained as a linguist at the University of Nairobi. The research work was done June 1992-January 1993:[6]

The two brothers: **Mzee Gacinya,** born around 1914, and **Mzee Muyombane,** born around 1909, *Abagunga*. Interviewed on two occasions, lasting six hours altogether.

Mzee Kajanja gave information on the *Abazigaba* clan as well as *Nyabingi* and *Ryangombe* mediums. **Mzee Rwabyuma,** about 60 years old, *Umusindi*, contributed on the *Abacyaba* and the *Abasiita*. They were interviewed on the same tape, 9-12 a.m.

Mzee Mico Joseph, born around 1924, left Rwanda in 1962. He had worked for the French Cultural Centre. Time: 2-4 p.m.

Rev. Mpyisi, born in 1917, *Umushambo*, place: Dam Estate, Nairobi. Rev. Mpyisi had been a member of the National Council under *Umwami* Mutara III Rudahigwa, who ruled from 1931 until his death in 1959 (Hertefelt 1962:228). He left Rwanda in the fifties and has been travelling extensively in Burundi, Zimbabwe, Uganda and other countries. Time: 2-5 p.m.

Mrs Mujawingoma, born around 1912, wife of *Umwami* Yuhi V Musiinga of the *Banyinginya* dynasty. Musiinga was deposed by the Belgians in 1931 (Hertefelt 1962:228). *Mujawingoma* left Rwanda in 1935 and spent about 15 years in Zaire. After Musiinga had died in exile she returned home in the 1950's. The civil war

1959-1960 forced her back into exile in Congo, then to Bujumbura in Burundi. In the 1970's she came to Nairobi. Time: 3-6 p.m.

Mrs Rose Mukande, born around 1912. *Umweega* of the *igikeli*, 'frog' totem, she is another wife of *Umwami* Musiinga. Exiled in Zaire 1930-1956, back to Rwanda after Musinga's death, exiled again 1959-60. Time: 3-6 p.m.

Umusindikazi Muteteri, born around 1922. She said her father had taught her about Rwandan culture and kingship. Time: 3-5.30 p.m.

Mzee Rurangirwa Augustin, born around 1932, *Umutsobe* of the *inka y'amanya*, 'striped cow' totem. Belongs to the *Abiru*, kingmakers and keepers of the secrets of the kingdom and the major kingship drum, *Kalinga*. Time: 9 hours altogether.

Anonymous **Umugungakazi,** born around 1907, gave interesting information that revealed a deep insight about Rwandan kingship traditions and symbolism. Time: 2-5 p.m.

Anonymous **Umweegakazi,** born around 1910. Place: Dam Estate. Comments by Butare Dismas: "Loss of concentration and cohesion but very crucial/important ideas." Time: 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

WESTERN REGION

Bunyoro Kingdom (Banyoro)
Hoima District

1992-**Prof. Byaruhanga-Akiiki** at the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy at Makerere University identified the knowledgeable elders to approach for the Bunyoro old kingdom, while **Dr Shirley Byakutaga** selected the Munyoro teacher **Mrs Ahuura Theopista** to be my research assistant.

Information 6/5 1992-**Rev. Father Charles Nkende,** *Omuhinda* of the *nkende* 'monkey' totem, Bujumbura Catholic Parish, Hoima.

Information 6/5 1992-**Omubiito Harbert Kimera,** *Okwiri*, incumbent Head of the *Ababiito* clan, Duhaga Teachers College, Hoima.

Interview 7/5 1992-**Omusuuli Abbyasaali Omukonda Karongo Adyeri,** born in 1912, totem: *embuzi*, 'goat', home: Kiryatete Village, Hoima. *Karongo* is his title. According to tradition his ancestor brought the *Babiito* twin brothers to

Bunyoro. *Nyakooka* and *Karongo* were *abafumu*, diviners of the *Babiito. Karongo* is responsible for important parts of installation and *Mpango* drum rituals.

Interview 7/5 1992-**Omucwezikati Yonia Kabanyoro** (Anglican), born 18/6 1903, clan: *Bacwezi*, totem: *obusito*, 'milk from a cow within four days of mating or giving birth'. She had been the first, but not the official, wife of Sir Tito Winyi, *Omukama* of Bunyoro. Lived in Busiisi, Hoima. Related the *Bacwezi* epic.

Interview 8/5 1992-**Omucwezi Jesse Ndahura,** born in 1907, totem: *Amata g'obusito*, 'milk from a cow four days after mating or calving'. *Eikondere* player, that is royal trumpeter, living in Mparo village, Hoima.

Interview 8/5 1992-**Omubiito Isaya Karubanga**, born in 1909, totem: *engabi*, 'bushbuck', royal *Ntimbo* drum player, grew up at the palace. Lived in Buchunga village, 4 miles from Hoima. On two occasions the king of Bunyoro had sent him to Karagwe. He did not speak English and proved to be unusually well informed about many aspects of Kinyoro kingship traditions and symbolism. He died in November 1993.

Visit at the Mparo Tombs, *Karuzika wa Kabalega*, 9/5 1992-**Omukwongakati Angela Kabasindi,** totem: *engabi*, 'bushbuck' incumbent *Omugo*, ritual wife of *Omukama* Kabalega's tomb (Kabalega passed on in 1923). She had inherited the position from her paternal aunt, *ishenkati*. As the hereditary keeper of the tomb *Omukwongakati* is not allowed to marry and at every New Moon she carries out certain rituals. Kabasindi died around 1996.

Information given to **Ahurra Theopista** in June 1992-**Omubiitokati Nyanjura Evasi,** from Bugambe Village in Hoima. She told a long story about the *enyange*, 'egret'.

Interview and participation at ritual function 4/11 1992-**Kibandwa Venance Byaruhanga,** born in 1942, *Kibandwa wa Ngobya*, 'priest of Ngobya spirit, *Mucwezi*', *nyakatagara*, 'medium'. *Omusazima*, totem: *buhooro*, 'a kind of tree' in Ngobya Village, named after the Ngobya hill, the abode of the spirit, *Mucwezi*, of the same name, 5 miles from Hoima. Other *Basazima* clan members and holders of ritual duties present: **Tophas Namahunge** (woman chairperson of all the *embandwa* in the village), **Stephano Nyakojo, Nasanaire Kasaija** and **Theresa Kaheru.** During *kubandwa*, 'spirit mediumship' they smoked the twinned pipe and sang the *Nyinamwiru Ow'ekibele kimoi* '*Nyinamwiru*, the One-breasted' song.

Interview 5/11 1992-**Kibandwa Ujensio Kamanyire**, priest of *Musaija Mukuru* spirit, *Mucwezi*. *Omuboopi*, totem: *engabi*, 'bushbuck', who lived in *Musaija Mukuru* Village on Hoima-Tooro road, about 7-8 miles from Hoima. Present: **Siira Kahwa-Atieni**, *Omuhinda* of the *enkende*, 'monkey', totem, his mother **Nyabiliyo Elwanise**, *Omuboopi* of the *engabi*, 'bushbuck' totem (her father had been *Kibandwa)* and their neighbour **Stephen Karubanga**, *Omusingo* of the *ente y'omuhara* 'black cow that has a stripe that goes from the forehead down all the way to the tail', totem.

Interview 5/11 1992-**Mzee Thomas Tibeita**, born in 1898, *Omusiita*[7] from Kwatamigo Village, Kihumuro, Hoima. Mzee had been a musician at Bombo Military Barracks, Medical Assistant, lay leader in the Church of Uganda and Sub-county Chief and Assistant *Katikiro*, 'Prime Minister' of Sir Tito Winyi. Present: Mzee Tibeita's sister **Dorosira**, born in 1916.

Masindi District

Interview 9/5 1992-**Omuhinda Simon Kyamanya**, born in 1913, totem: *enkende*, 'monkey', Kirianga Village, Masindi. He was Permanent Secretary in the Kingdom Government from 1956 up to 1967 and the abolishment of kingdoms. Then he became an Administrative Secretary in Bunyoro District Administration.

Interview 11/5 1992-**Omubiitokati 'Princess' Masiitura Burara Atwoki**, born in 1918, totem: *engabi*, 'bushbuck'. Village: Kihande, outside Masindi. She was the granddaughter of *Omukama* Kabalega, daughter of Kabalega's son, *Omubiito* Nicolawo Kakyomya. Masiitura Burara shared very interesting information from inside the *ekikaali*. She died in 1993, just a few months after the interview.

Interview 11/5 1992-**Omucwa Ausi Rwakaikara**, born in 1924, totem: *engabi*, 'bushbuck'. Lives in Kiijura, Masindi. Mr Rwakaikara started as a Gombolola chief in the local government. After some time he was appointed as Minister of Finance in the Kingdom government. When the kingdoms were abolished in 1967 the post of Secretary General, Head of the then Bunyoro District, was created. In 1969 Rwakaikara was appointed Secretary General of the District, a position he held until 1971, when Amin overthrew the Obote government.

Interview 11/5 1992-**Omumwolikati Eseeza Mpirima**, born in 1922, totem: *engabi*, 'bushbuck', lives in Kiijura village, Masindi. She came from Bugahya, Mukwenda *isaza*, 'county', Hoima. Eseeza Mpirima used to go to the *ekikaali*, 'palace' for the *Bamwoli* clan had a royal drum called *Kimezere* in the palace. She described royal rituals as she had seen them.

Interview in Kampala 22/6 1994-**Rukya Batebe**, born in 1938, the official sister, *Batebe*, of *Omukama* Solomon Gafabusha Iguru I Amooti of Bunyoro-Kitara (installed 11/6 1994). *Batebe* is also the Head of the *Babiitokati*, the royal women of the *Babiito* clan. She is the daughter of Sir Tito Winyi. Present on the occasion of the interview: **Mrs Ruth Bushara**, who is the elder sister of *Omukama* Iguru. They gave information concerning the installation of the *Omukama*.

Tooro Kingdom, Kabarole District (Batooro)

Interview 29/12 1992-**Omupanyarwa Edison Rubaale,** born in 1923, *Ababiito* of the *Bapanyarwa* sub-clan are the ones to install the *Omukama*. Totem: *engabi*, 'bushbuck'. Home: *Amakomi ga Ndahura*, Bukuuku Sub-county, Burahya County, Kabarole. Related the Tooro version of the *Bacwezi* epic. Contact and introduction: Rev. Clovis Kyalimpa, below.

Information in Kampala 17/6 1994, at the *Kyaruziika* Palace in Fort Portal 31/8 1995-**Rev. Clovis Kyolimpa,** *Omwisanza*, General Secretary of the Tooro Kingdom. On the same occasion in *Kyaruziika*: **Rev. Richard Baguma,** born in 1937, *Omusiita* and Head of the *Abajaguzi* royal drummers.

Information in Kampala 6/11 1996-**Omusonga Ibona Sezi**, born in 1943, totem: *ensenene*, 'grasshopper', title: *Omweganya*, royal spear keeper and incumbent hereditary keeper of the Tooro royal tombs at *Karambi*. This office had been held by his ancestors ever since Kaboyo I broke away from Bunyoro and founded the Tooro Kingdom around 1830.

NORTHERN REGION

Kitgum District (Acholi)

Information and introductions in Växjö 1976-78, Kampala 9/3 1987, 6/6, 28/6 and 13/7 1993-**Mr Lucas Jeremiah Opira**, born in 1933, of the *Pacwaa* clan. They do not eat *rudda*, 'bushbuck'. Home: Mucwini north of Kitgum town. Had served as Deputy Chief General Service Officer and Deputy Permanent Secretary to the President 1964-1970. Mr Opira was a refugee sent by the United Nations to Sweden. He had conducted extensive research on interlacustrine history. Died in 2000.

Information and introductions in Kampala 2/3, 18/5, 16/7 1993, 14/4 1995-**Mr Onyango Odongo, Jamal Mikla** of the *Puranga* clan, Gulu, a committed historian (see Bibliography). Mr Onyango selected **Mr Ataro Olula** for the position as my research assistant in Kitgum.

Information in Kampala 2/3 1993-**Mr Dwonga** of the *Pacwaa* clan in Kitgum. They do not eat *rudda*, 'bushbuck'. Contact and introduction: Mr Onyango Odongo, above.

Pajule Spiritual Paramouncy

Information and continuous clarifications, Kampala and Kitgum District March 1993-1997-**Mr Eugenio Olanya,** born in 1929, of the *Pajule* clan, Oryang-Lalano Village. His brother was a priest and spiritual *Rwot*, 'king', medium of their *Lagoro* ancestor with historical links to Bunyoro, *Luduni* in Luo. All their regalia had been burnt by *abarokole*, 'Christian revivalists'. Mr Olanya was my consultant for the Acholi part of the fieldwork and led our pilgrimage to the skull reburial place of their first spiritual king *Lagoro* and his descendants in the forest of Ibi at the foot of Mount Lagoro. Contact and introduction: Mr L.J. Opira. Mr Olanya died in 1997.

Interview 17/6 1993-**Ventorino Too,** born in 1937, spokesman of the Pajule clan, Oryang-Kulukwak village. Pajule clan elders present:

Romano Akwite, born in 1914, **Siluani Lagoro**, born in 1926, **Erisanuari Otto**, born in 1926, **Remijo Olum,** born in 1937, **Sisto Akera**, born in 1937, **Ersita Akullu**, born in 1911, **Margarita Ajok** born in 1915, **Anjulina Lapura,** born in 1923, **Silverina Acwanyo**, born in 1926, **Esther Anek,** born in 1928, **Marcella Nyega**, born in 1928, and **Eugenio Olanya,** (above).

Interview 18/6 1993-**Gwido Latigo Olal,** born in 1920, of the *Koyo* clan in Ora-Otwilo village, Pajule. This is one of the 28 clans under *Lagoro* spiritual rule, as mentioned by Fidele Lodi, below.

Interview 18/6 1993-**Fidele Lodi,** born in 1907, of the *Ogole* clan, also under *Lagoro* spiritual rule.

Interview 19/6 1993-**Paulo Ochaya,** born in 1895, of the *Pacwaa* clan, Pacwaa village, Mucwini. *Lagoro* is also the spiritual ruler of the *Pacwaa* clan.

Information 21/6 1993-**John Moro,** born in 1928, of the *Palwo* clan, Palenga village. He was the incumbent keeper of the *Tong Ker*, 'royal spear', of the Pajule, which was said to have emerged out of the right hand side of the neck of *Lagoro* in Chope (Bunyoro). John Moro had come for the New Moon celebration to pray at the shrine of *Lagoro*, Oryang, together with 15 other people.

Agoro, and Palwo from the house of Ono–no Lagoro association

Interview 19/6 1993-**Rev. Jacksoni Obwor**, born in 1943, of the *Lagorone* clan in Ngacino village, Agoro, near the border of Sudan, but not connected to *Lagoro*.

Interview 19/6 1993-**Banarba Onek**, born in 1905, of the *Pabar* clan, Agoro.

Interview in Kampala 8/2 1994-**Mr Olula Justo Lamaka**, born around 1934, of the *Palwo* clan. Village: Omia Anyima, outside Kitgum town. Mr Olula is the legal heir to the *rwot*-ship from the house of Ono, direct from Kien through Odong. They do not eat *rudda*, 'bushbuck'. The *Palwo* originated in Chope, Bunyoro, where some still reside.

CENTRAL REGION

Buganda (Baganda)

Information in Kampala 6/8 1993-**Mr Edward Nsimbi** of the *Mamba*, 'lungfish' clan, from Masaka. (In Buganda the clan and the totem bear identical names.)

Information in Kampala 9/8 1993-**Mrs Lydia Mugambi**, Makerere University.

Information and introductions in Kampala, September 1993-1995-**Mr Duk Ronnie Sessanga Mukubira** of the *Njovu*, 'Elephant' clan, the then Deputy Minister of Culture of the Buganda Lukiiko (Kingdom Parliament). Mr Sessanga was my main contact person for the Baganda. Introduction by courtesy of Mr Opira: **Rev. Daniel Kajumba**, at that time the *Katikiro*, 'Prime Minister' of the Buganda Kingdom.

Information in Mr Sessanga's office, Kampala 14/9 1993-**Hajji Juma Lulika Katende** of the *Lugave*, 'Pangolin' clan, over 80 years old, the drumkeeper, *Kawula* of the *Mujaguzi* kingship drums in Buganda.

Information in Mr Sessanga's office, Kampala 15/2 1993-**Mr Godfrey Kaaya Kavuma** of the *Nvuma* 'a little shell at the bottom of the lake' clan. He was the incumbent Deputy Chief Treasurer of the Buganda Lukiiko (Kingdom Parliament).

Information in Kampala 17/9 1993-**Dr Kasalina Matovu** of the *Ente* 'tail-less cow' clan, Institute of Languages, Makerere University. Died in 2004.

Information in Mr Sessanga's office, Kampala 25/5 1994-**Kiwanuka Ntambi za Mukama**, 'the Lightgiver of God', *Ssemandwa*, 'father of the priests of Kiwanuka', his actual name was Wamala Kibaawo Ndaula, clan: *Njovu*, 'Elephant'. Ntambi za Mukama was at that time the priest, bodyguard and official entertainer, *kazanyikirizi*, of the king, *Kabaka* of Buganda. He comes from Warusi Buganda in Wabusana County.

Information in Mr Sessanga's office, Kampala 7/11 1995-**Mzee Erifaazi Kibuuka Nvule Kisitu**, born in 1915, of the *Fumbe* clan, a retired Primary Teacher from Saale Waswa Memorial School and Farm Institute, Wanjeyo, Kampala. Mzee Kizito had done extensive research concerning the essence of the Kiganda clans (see Bibliography). Interpreter: **Gustavas Nsubuga Kizito** of the *Mamba* clan, Member of the Buganda Lukiiko (Kingdom Parliament).

The kingdom of Kooki

Information in Mr Sessanga's office, Kampala 27/6 1994-**Apolo Sansa Kabumbuli Kamuswaga III,** born in 1971, heir to the throne of the small kingdom of Kooki, sharing history with Kiziba, Buhaya. The *engabi* totem comes from the *Kamuswaga*'s mother's side. The *Kamuswaga* royal title-holders do not have a totem.

Endnotes

1 There are two groups of *Abazigaba* in Karagwe identified either by the *engabi*, 'bushbuck' or the *amara*, 'intestines' *emiziro*, 'totems' (Rev. Fr Luduviki Rwakiboine, BFFN/5:1, 1991).

2 The denomination "cousin sister" denotes that she regards herself as a sister, although in reality they are cousins.

3 *Omurangira*, 'prince, son of a king', is a Luganda term (information from Mzee Anania Murumba and Mzee Petero Garobungo, Nkore, BFFM:528, 1992).

4 *Omumbeja* is a Luganda term, *omumbejja*, 'daughter of a king' (information from Mzee Petero Garubungo and Anania Murumba, Nkore, BFFM:528, 1992).

5 *Rubuga* is the Kinyankore variation of the Luganda term *Lubuga*, 'Crown Sister'.

6 Butare did a thorough study usually visiting some informants more than ten times (BFFM:702, 1992).

7 The *Basiita* in Bunyoro respect the *obusito* totem, 'milk from a cow four days after mating or calving' (H.K. Karubanga 1948).

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II. Nkore, Buhweju, Igara, Rujumbura, Rwanda	1992	pp. 525-874
III. Bunyoro, Tooro, Acholi	1992-1993	pp. 875-1108

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Notes from Karagwe I	1973-1975	pp. 1-153
Notes from Karagwe II	1978-1991	pp. 1-128

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BFFN/2 Kyamutwara	Sept. 1991	pp. 1-56
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BF unpublished notes and records are kept in Uppsala, Sweden: birgitta. farelius@gmail. com

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Abbreviations

AAR	*African Archaeological Review*
GHA	*General History of Africa*
HA	*History in Africa, A Journal of Method, African Studies Association*
IJAHS	*International Journal of African Historical Studies*
JAH	*Journal of African History*
JARP	*Journal of African Religion and Philosophy*
JWH	*Journal of World History*
Man, JRAI	*Man, Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*
ORP	*Occasional Research Papers*
TNR	*Tanzania Notes and Records*
UJ	*Uganda Journal*

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